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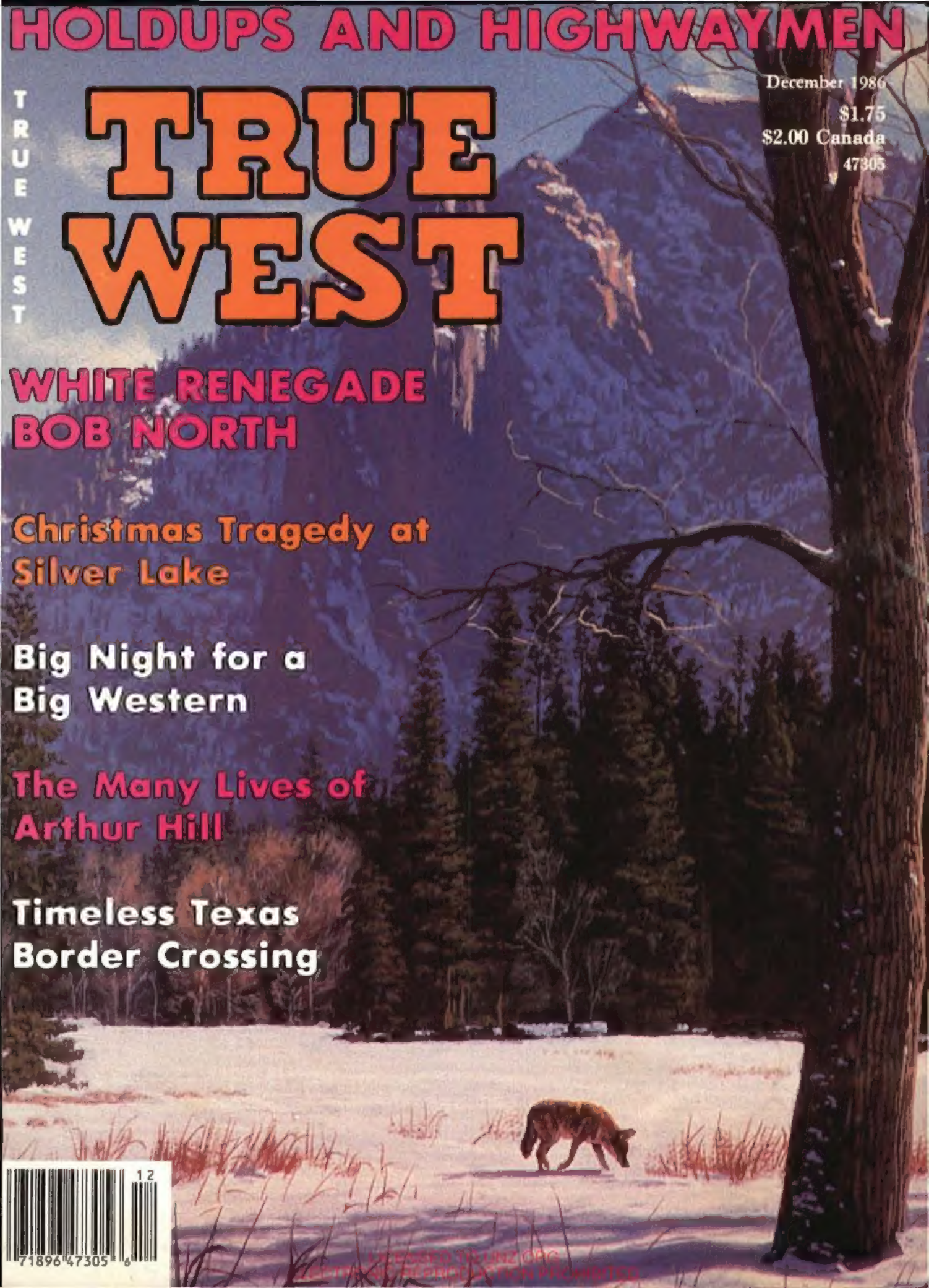

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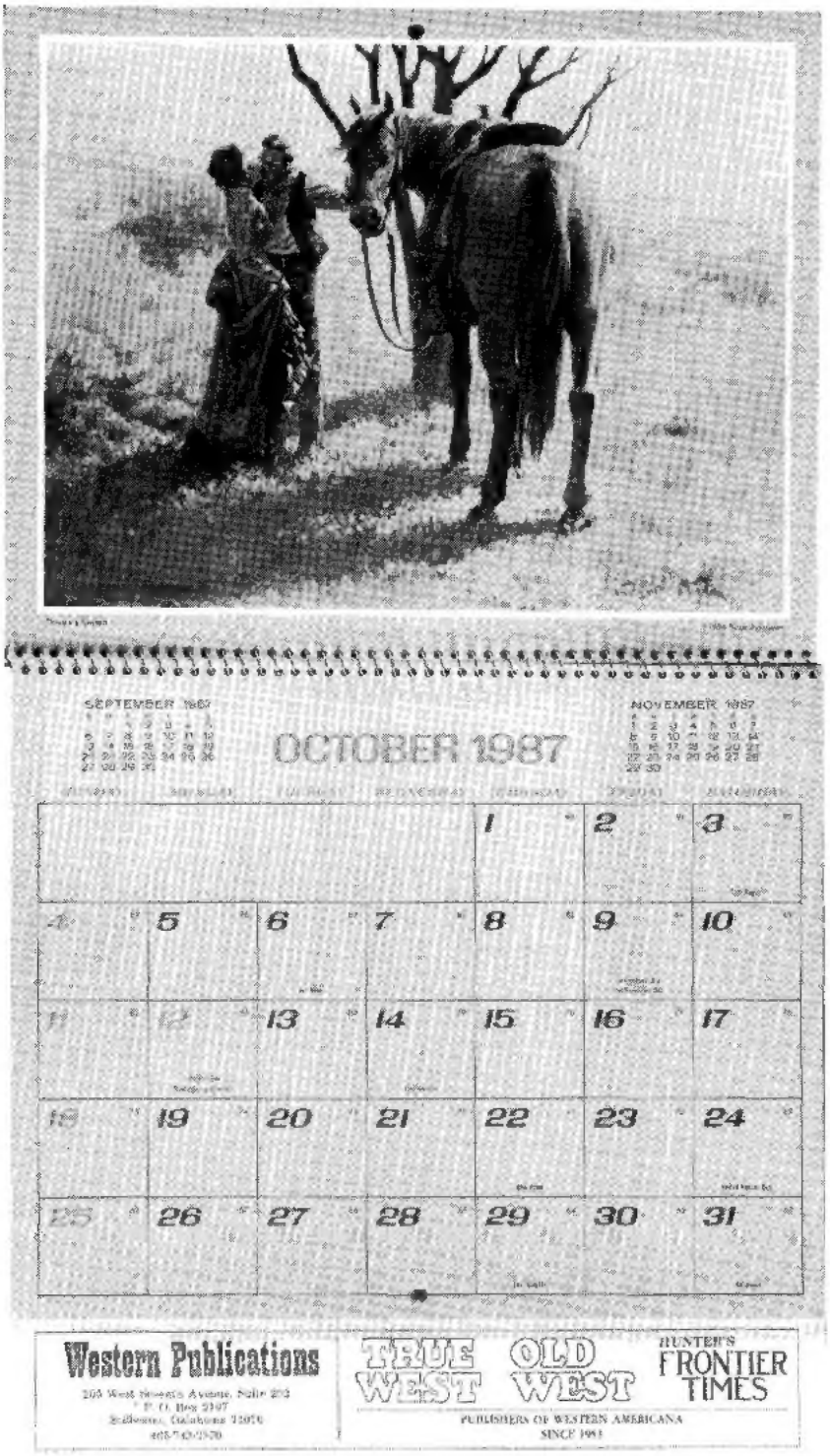

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TRUE WEST

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Whole No. 224

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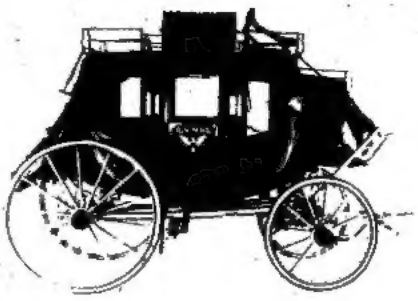

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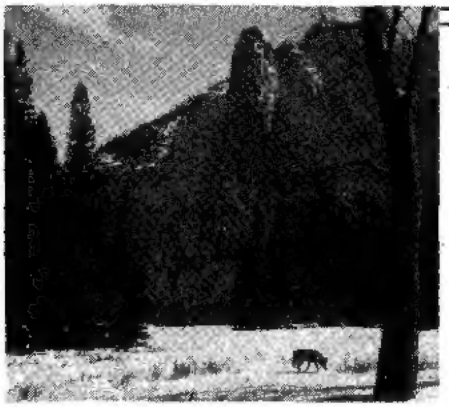

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From the Editor

Historians and history buffs are afflicted with the incurable disease of looking backward. This time of year the illness seems to become most acute. Besides the usual symptom of listlessly pondering the distant past, we become lost in thoughts about the year just gone by.

Our ailment is rarely fatal, but it often leads to lethargy and a low grade fever. Occasionally it is accompanied by temporary paralysis, and we sit motionless by the fireplace for long hours at a time. Our friends and loved ones are inevitably relieved when we finally recover and rejoin them in the present.

This year I've been laid low by a particularly bad case of nostalgia. The only cure, I am told, is to write down some of the years' highlights and get them out of my system.

It's been an eventful twelve months in western history. Texas celebrated its 150th birthday. Kansas celebrated its 125th. The Colt revolver also celebrated its 150th birthday, and in Arizona the 100th anniversary of Geronimo's final surrender was observed.

With that much going on, it's hard to sort out the highlights. But for me the highpoint of the year had to be when we learned that Nellie Snyder Yost's article, "The National Game Out West," which we published, won a spur award from the Western Writers of America.

Of course, I can't discuss the year's highlights without mentioning our two special issues. Our Texas Sesquicentennial issue included three great articles, "Fifteen Years to a Republic," by Field Roebuck; "Church of Destiny," Robert Dyer's fascinating account of the history of the Alamo before and after the famous battle; and "The Legend of Britt Johnson," Paula Mitchell Marks' biography of one of early Texas' more famous black pioneers. That issue also stands out in my mind as the time when I learned to spell and pronounce *sesquicentennial*. Our other special issue, Women Who Won the West, was planned for over a year. We hope it will be only the beginning of many more fine stories about the role of women in settling the frontier.

In 1986 we continued TRUE WEST's tradition of publishing the very best articles on outlaws and lawmen of the Old West. Of our stories on badmen, some famous and some not-so-famous, several stand out: "The Great Outlaw Hoax," by Steve Eng (February); "Harvey Logan's Escape," by Wayne E. Kindred (May); and my favorite, "That Remarkable Horsethief Pike," by Glenn Shirley. I especially liked "Pike," I reckon, because it was fresh material and because it was so darned funny.

My favorite lawman story was Robert K. DeArment's "Kreeger's Toughest Arrest" (June). DeArment's research is always impeccable, and Undersheriff Lew Kreeger's arrest of his only son is a story with real human pathos.

My selection for best article about mining in the Old West has to be Stephen M. Voynick's "Hard Rock Champions" (August). Who could ever forget the image of the injured miner, his hands smashed and bloodied by an errant hammer blow, holding the drill and shouting at his partner to continue, "Come down you!"

No year would be complete without some good stories on the military in the West. I had a couple of favorites in that area. "Gilt-edged Assignments," by John P. Langellier (August), included some unforgettable photos of officers riding bicycles, playing baseball, and pursuing other peacetime pursuits. And for good old-fashioned action, I liked "Custer's Navy" (October), Ken Brooks' thrilling account of the sternwheeler *Far West*'s involvement in the Little Big Horn campaign.

I'm particularly partial to stories about ranchers and pioneers, I reckon because I've had the good fortune to know a few old-time cowmen and farmers. My top two picks here are "Castlewood Creek and the Silver Cup," by J.B. Corral (June); and "The Long Ride: A Horse Trader's Revenge," by Helen Butler (February).

It's been a good year for history lovers, and we have more great western reading lined up for 1987. Until then, happy holidays!

John Joerschke

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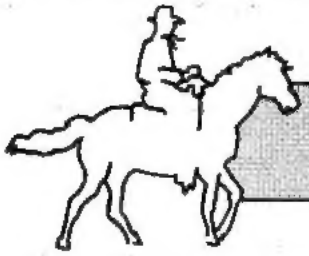

Truly Western

Letters from our readers

Fan of Accuracy

Thank you for having such an astute book reviewer as Joseph C. Porter on your staff (Books, September 1986). Unlike many of today's historians, Mr. Porter knows his subject well.

Accounts by Indian participants in nineteenth century battles with U.S. soldiers are very colorful, and quite interesting in showing how Indians regarded their opponents. But they are a dangerous area upon which to hang one's historical hat. Anyone who has played parlor "message" games knows how much a story changes as it is sent around the room. And so it goes with "hearsay" history.

Mr. Porter also knows the correct arms carried by troopers during the period. Once, while giving a talk at my daughter's high school, I noticed that the history book told of how U.S. soldiers were able to defeat the Indians because the troops carried Winchester repeating rifles and the Indians only had bows and arrows. I wrote the author, a PhD at the University of California, explaining that Winchesters were a civilian arm favored by Indians, and that soldiers had to contend with single-shot Springfields. Some months later, the good doctor was man enough to reply—admitting his error.

Much of the historical ignorance which plagues this particular period of United States history arises from academians spending too much time in answering the dictates of curricula and too little time given to independent study. Accurate books are available to interested parties, however, and it is obvious that Mr. Porter has made good use of them.—**Jack Steed, Sacramento, CA.**

Editor's Note: TRUE WEST agrees that Mr. Porter is an excellent reviewer and is pleased to include his material. The printed review carried the sentence, "Also, recent archaeological excavations at the Custer Battlefield indicate Indian carbines at the battle outnumbered those of the troopers two to one." The correct sentence, as written by Mr. Porter reads, "Also recent archaeological excavations at the Custer Battlefield have prompted reconsideration of the entire question of the weaponry used in the battle."

Soiled About "Soiled Doves"

The article "Soiled Doves on Celluloid" by Sandra Hansen Konte, published in the July issue of TRUE WEST, while undoubtedly correct in its general conclusions, contains a number of unsubstantiated opinions and factual errors.

It would serve no purpose to enumerate all of them, but some specific items do bear specific comment:

1. Dora Hand is referred to as a prostitute and is alleged to have been a victim of target practice by a drunken customer. Neither statement is true. There is no evidence that Dora Hand was a prostitute; certainly, she sang in saloons and sold drinks, but in fifty years of studying frontier history, I have yet to see such an allegation backed up with factual data. As to her death, she was killed by mistake; all sources state that she was sleeping in a room rented from Mayor Dog Kelley at Dodge City, Kelley having gone to Ft. Dodge for medical treatment; a Jim Kenedy, son of the Texas cattle king, Mifflin Kenedy, angered by a run-in with Kelley, decided to kill Kelley, and early in the morning of October 4, 1878, fired a bullet through the wall where he believed Kelley to be sleeping; the shot killed Dora Hand.

2. In the same sentence, Big Nose Kate is also alleged to have been killed in the same manner. According to historian Frank Waters on page 209 of his book "The Earp Brothers of Tombstone" (which is based on his interviews with Allie Earp, widow of Virgil Earp), Kate died in a home for aged pioneers.

3. As to "My Darling Clementine", the film plot is, of course, complete fiction, saddled with authentic names. However, the reference to John Ireland as "the killer of one of honorable Wyatt Earp's henchmen" is incorrect; the "henchman" was the youngest Earp brother, James, and he wasn't killed by Ireland but by Walter Brennan.

While generally very pleased with TRUE WEST and its companion OLD WEST, I am always bothered by the lack of any documentation in the published articles. I presume that the authors do furnish some sort of data references when the articles are submitted, and if that presumption is correct, I would suggest that same be listed at the end of the articles. The trouble with printed error is that the mistake becomes embedded as fact and is repeated and quoted time after time.—**Ernest E. Robb, Tulsa, OK.**

Higgins and Harrels

I guess I should have written a month sooner, but isn't the June, 1986 issue of TRUE WEST whole number 218? This issue was also newsworthy about Nellie Snyder Yost and Eve Ball. "Castlewood Creek and the Silver Cup" by J.B. Corral was superb. Must have more like it!

About three months ago you printed my previous letter to you. As usual, I received letters about this in spite of no address. An interesting letter was received from Dr. A. J. Mackey of Camp Verde, Arizona. He stated that he knew Pink Higgins of Texas. He also knew the Harrels who were living after the Texas Rangers convinced the Higgins and the Harrels to call off their feud. Dr. Mackey moved to Lampasas, Texas, where he could go to school. He was "tried out" by three of the Harrel boys. Their idea was if one could not whip a newcomer, another one of them could. Mackey had good luck and was never bothered by them again. Dr. Mackey says that the Harrel boys never reformed. They fought all newcomers as well as among themselves.

My wife, Alice, and I live on a remote little farm. We just recently got electricity and a cow pasture phone line. We have a windmill for water. This is in the Mother Lode area. A lot of history was made here.

Keep up the good work. You folks are the greatest!— **Red Hoyle, Ione, CA.**

Editor's Note: The June 1986 TRUE WEST is Whole Number 218.

Hood River Blackie's Friend

Like another reader, I have little interest in old movies and movie stars.

In 1931, I ran away from home in the Ozark Hills of South Missouri. I became a teen-age hobo. By September, I had room and board on a ranch in Idaho and

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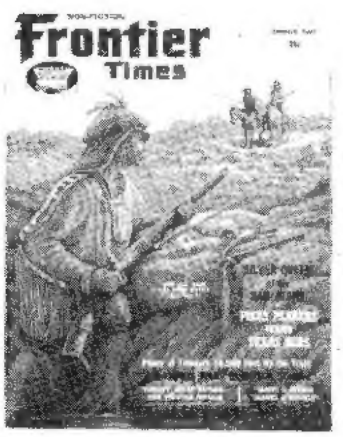

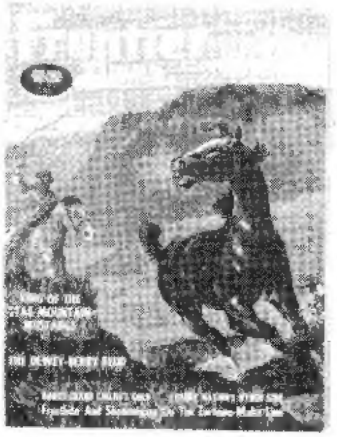

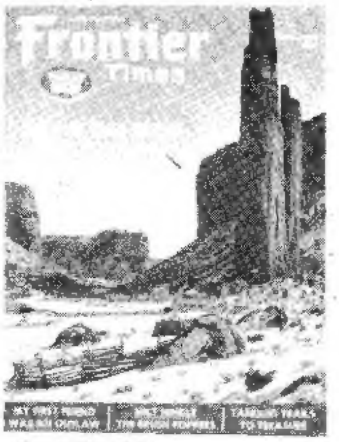

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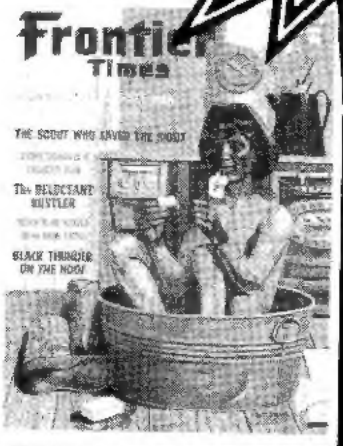

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attended high school for two years. I later enlisted in the army.

One of your issues had a hobo article about Hood River Blackie. I had received letters from him. He said he had married and lived in eastern California. I later heard that he had passed away. I really miss his articles.

I enjoy your magazine and will continue to do so. Keep up the good work.—**Willard E. Crawford, Oroville, CA.**

Likes the Real Westerners

I like TRUE WEST and have read it several years. But I would rather you told more about real old-time westerners and nothing about the movie actors and pictures. We all know that some of those old pictures were not true. I would rather see the stories about the old mining towns and the people who lived there. I also really enjoyed the stories about the ranch boss looking for a cook for the bunk house. I am from Idaho and know that the state is full of those old-time real western people. I would like to read more about them.

Thanks for asking for our ideas.—**H.B. Hanson, Kirkwood, MO.**

Colt Collector

Because I am an avid collector of Colt revolvers, I read with great interest the article "The Gun that Won the West Turns 150," by Konrad F. Schreier, Jr. Unfortunately, Mr. Schreier makes some significant errors that I am aware of. I believe they merit correction because they reflect the fascination with the Colt Single Action Revolver that so many writers have, as a result of which, these writers are ignorant of the details of other Colt products.

In a single paragraph on page 27, there are at least five errors, here italicized:

"The Colt company *was never slow to adopt improvements*, and in 1877 they brought out the *caliber* .45 Colt center fire Double Action *Army* Model of 1877, the Lightning Model. *Next, that gun was made as* the caliber .44-40 Double Action Frontier Six-Shooter. It was well thought of in its day, but it was complicated and difficult to maintain, which limited its popularity. *Manufactured until about 1902*, a large number of them were used in the West."

Sam Colt began experimenting with double action mechanisms as early as 1841, but did not adopt them for various

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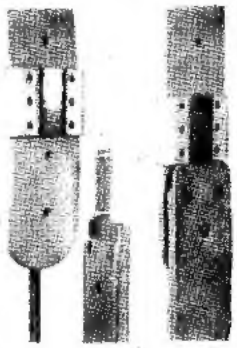

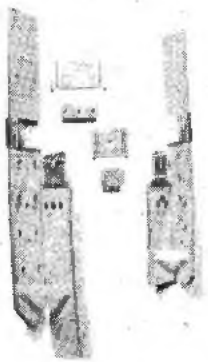

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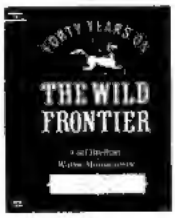

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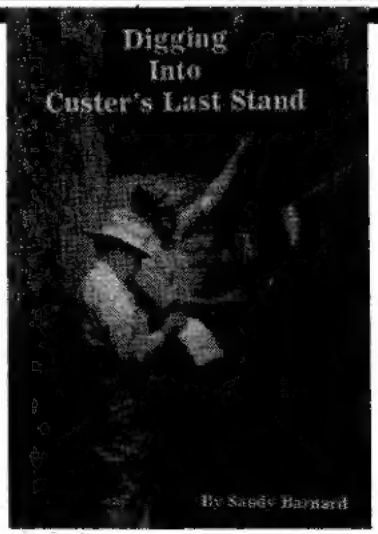

Story with many photos of the 1984 and 1985 archeological surveys of Custer Battlefield National Monument as well as the reburial service of the remains of 7th Cavalrymen in the battlefield's National Cemetery on June 25, 1986. Photos are of the artifacts and the professionals and volunteers who unearthed some 5,000 items from the 1876 battlefield during the two-year project.

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reasons. Double action revolvers were introduced in England and in the United States in 1858. To say that Colt "was never slow to adopt improvements" is obviously inaccurate. The Colt Factory waited a long time to introduce double actions. In 1877, Colt introduced the Double Action Model of 1877 Revolver (not "Army") initially in .38 caliber and later that year in .41 caliber, but never in .45 caliber. In 1878, the Double Action Model of 1878 was introduced; it was not "that [same] gun" simply being introduced in caliber .44-40, but of a significantly different design, with a solid frame. Finally, neither revolver was manufactured until 1902; the M1877 was made until 1909, the M1878 until 1905.

There are other errors as well; for example, in the very next paragraph, the author gives 1892 as the year Colt introduced its first swingout cylinder model, rather than 1889.—**Richard C. Marohn, M.D., Chicago, IL.**

Author's Response: In regard to Dr. Marohn's comments on my article in the October 1986 issue of TRUE WEST, I can say three things: It could be no more than the most compact form of history to fit the magazine's format. This kind of compression can lead to leaving out more than goes in, and this often leads to misinterpretation. Second, my comments on things like the Lightning Colt Double Action revolver and other Colts are based on contemporary references. These primary sources include publications such as *Shooting and Fishing* (predecessor of American Rifleman), *The Army & Navy Journal*, and other contemporary magazines. There are not many books which help, but I use Gould, Norton, and such other authors as I can find. Unfortunately the original, primary sources I use often differ from many of the secondary sources since I am fortunate enough to have access to a large number of them.

I trust Dr. Marohn will understand my point of view with regard to compressed Colt history and believe that what he may consider "errors" are, in fact, differences in sources and opinions.

Your letters and comments are welcome. Please keep letters to 300 words or less. All letters received by Western Publications will be considered for publication unless otherwise stipulated in the letter. Space does not permit us to print all letters we receive. Be sure to include full name, address and zip code. Photos welcome. Address all letters to Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076.

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Western Roundup

Places to go and things to see in the West

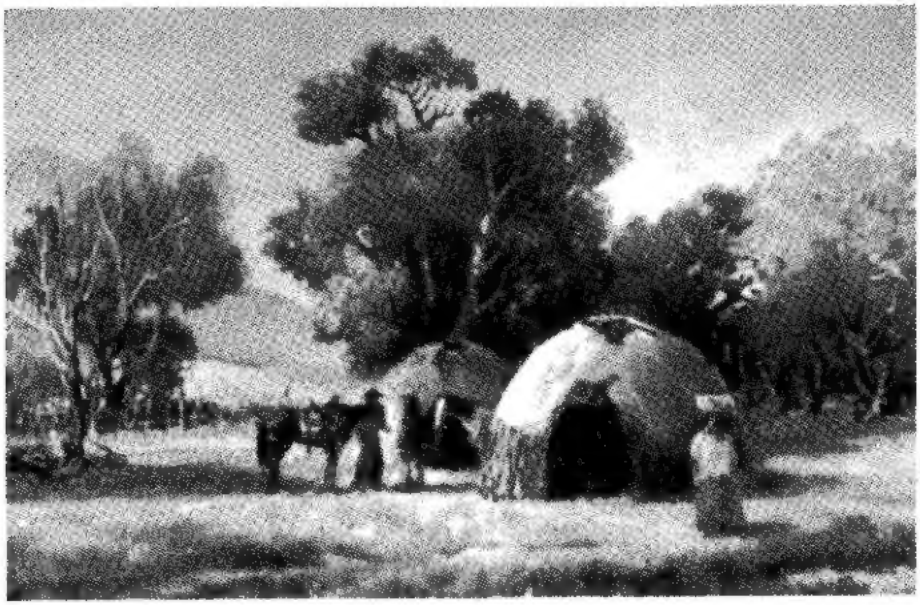
Hal Empie Day

A day commemorating western artist Hal Empie will be held December 7. Empie began drawing at the age of five when his family lived in a thick-walled, one-room adobe house in Safford, Arizona. As a boy he worked early mornings, lunch hours, and evenings at the Best Drug Store while attending Safford schools, where he graduated in 1927. He taught himself to draw and learned respect for the healing arts at the same time. He entered the University of Arizona for pre-medical studies, but left to marry. He later attended The Capitol College of Pharmacy in Denver and passed the Arizona State Board examination in 1929 at the age of twenty. Too young to be licensed, Hal was allowed to practice with a special permit until he was twenty-one.

During this time in his life, Empie was drawing and teaching himself to paint, and after five years as a druggist in Solomonville he left that employment to be a sign painter. He lettered trucks and made signs for such companies as Coca-Cola and Texaco. When he wasn't painting signs he was painting pictures.

In 1934 he was recruited to be the pharmacist for the Duncan Drug Store. He agreed to do this for "just a short time," as he was eager to get on with his painting. As it turned out, Hal Empie was to be an artist and a pharmacist for the next forty-seven years in Duncan. Between prescriptions he was at his easel. Since then, he has turned out painting after painting. His work has appeared in *Arizona Highways*, *American Artist*, and *Life* magazines. He also has had a parallel career as a nationally known cartoonist.

Hal Empie remains there in Duncan to this day. He is still painting pictures of the land and the people. And on December 7 he will again be honored with events such as a parade, dedication ceremonies, entertainment, arts and crafts fairs, and exhibits of some of his work.



"Amigos," by Hal Empie, whose paintings have been featured on Western Publications covers.

Jim Bridger Trading Post

The Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Department has announced the receipt of a $10,000 matching grant donated to the Fort Bridger State Historic Site to assist in the recreation of the Jim Bridger Trading Post.

George Caldwell, formerly of Fort Bridger and now residing in California, will donate $10,000 if it can be matched by other donations. Tom Lindmier, curator of Fort Bridger, said that Mr. Caldwell's interest in the fort began years earlier. He recently revisited the area and became very interested in the restoration of the site that attracts up to 100,000 visitors a year.

Fort Bridger, located in the southwest corner of Wyoming, was originally established in 1843 as a trading post by Jim Bridger and his partner, Louis Vasquez. It offered a blacksmith shop and supplies to travelers on the Oregon Trail. Later it became a major military installation and was vital to the Pony Express and Overland stage routes. In the late 1860s, personnel from the fort helped guard the workers building the transcontinental railroad. With the cessation of Indian hostilities in the late 1800s, the fort, along with others in the West, declined in importance.

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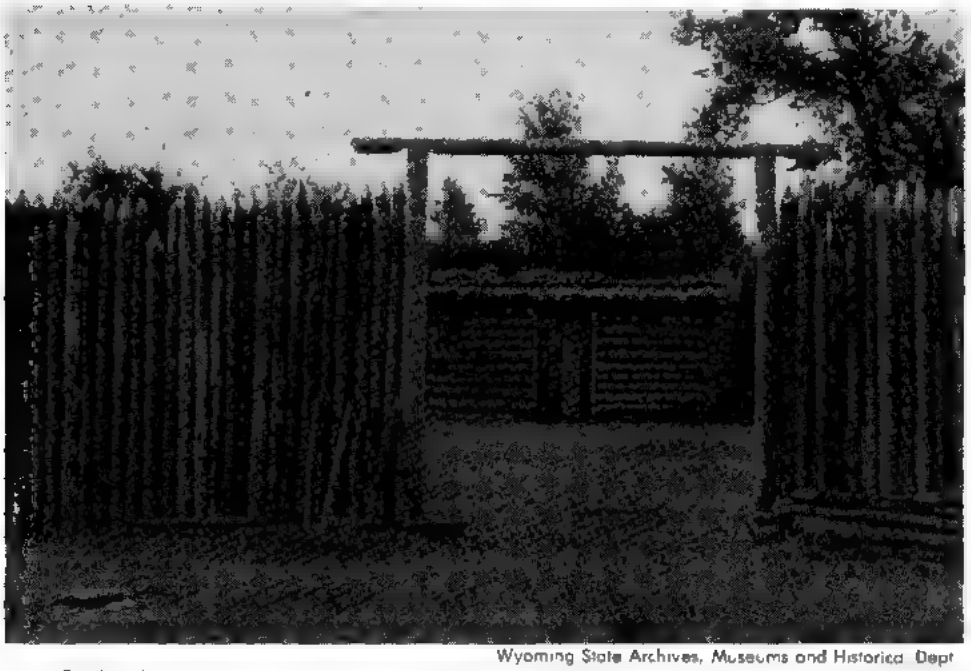

Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Dept

Bridger's Trading Post at the Fort Bridger State Historic Site in southwestern Wyoming is currently being reconstructed

Structures at the site have been painstakingly restored to provide a picture of a bygone era. Visitors can tour the site at their own pace. Walking leisurely through the museum, buildings and tree-covered grounds usually takes about an hour. Among the buildings that are currently interpreted are the post sutler's store, the commissary and the commanding officer's quarters. The smell of freshly baked cookies, made by the lady of the house, greets visitors in the recently renovated quarters.

The fort is open daily from May 15 to October 15, and weekends the remainder of the year. Living history interpretations are held throughout the week whenever possible.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the restoration of Jim Bridger's trading post should contact the Archives, Museums and Historical Department, Barrett Building, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002 or Tom Lindmier at Fort Bridger State Historic Site, Fort Bridger, Wyoming 82933.

"Copper King" Mansion

The thirty room residence of William Andrews Clark in Butte, Montana, has now been declared a National Historic Place by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The mansion has been featured in *National Geographic Magazine*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Examiner*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Readers Digest*.

Featured in the mansion are art glass and cut glass, hand-carved woodwork, antique silver, sculpture, hand-painted "fresco" ceilings, a $100,000 antique display, a $30,000 antique pipe organ, a ballroom, billiard room, chapel, and arts and crafts gallery. The mansion is open all year and guided tours are conducted 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. seven days a week. It is available for private parties, receptions, meetings, and teas. For more information write or phone Ann Smith, owner, Copper King Mansion, Butte, Montana 59701, or you may phone (406)782-7580

Cowboys on the Airways

A Houston, Texas, radio show is keeping classic cowboy music alive. "Cowboy Corral" on KPFT-FM features recordings by such old-time cowboy singers as The Sons of the Pioneers, Riders of the Purple Sage, and Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys.

Hosted by "Gabby" (aka Tony Ulrich *III*), the show also features a cast of colorful characters who are never quite within range of the microphone. Gabby "converses" with the comic "Little Arkansas," "Colorayda," an Indian named "Two Feathers," and others. In between the music and low-key humor, Gabby intersperses short items on western history and culture.

The show is a must for history buffs living in or visiting the Houston area. It airs Tuesday mornings.

Western Roundup is a report on places to go and things to see associated with the history of the Old West. Submissions are welcome. Information on scheduled events should be submitted at least six months prior to the event. Items on historic places are also welcome. Send information including photos to: Western Roundup, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107 Stillwater, OK 74076

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Earps' Descen

By CHUCK PARSONS

Did any of the Earp brothers have sons or grandsons to carry on the family name? That question comes from James R. Woods, P.O. Box 217, Sutter, CA 95982.

Virgil was the only one of the Earp brothers to have a child. His was not a typical marriage! Born in Hartford, Kentucky, on July 18, 1843, Virgil Walter Earp wanted to marry Ellen Rysdam. The parents opposed the union, however, so the lovers were secretly married at Knoxville, Iowa, on September 21, 1861. They gave the names of Walter Earp and Ellen Donahoo.

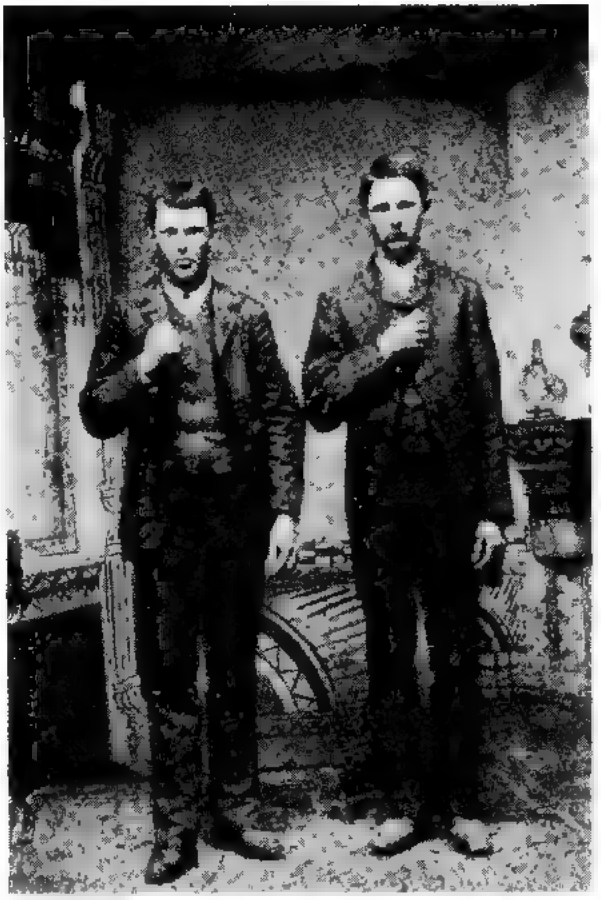
Then the Civil War intervened. Virgil left to serve with the Eighty-third Illinois Infantry. While he was away, due to some conniving by the parents, Virgil and Ellen each became convinced that the other was dead.

Mrs. Earp later married a John Von Rossen, and they eventually settled in Oregon. Virgil subsequently married Rosetta Dragoo at Lamar, Missouri, in 1870. But Ellen had had a daughter named Nellie Jane.

Virgil later discovered the duplicity of the parents, and he and the daughter "discovered" each other in 1888. Thus, none of the "fighting Earps" left a descendant to carry on the family name.

Could It Be? The photograph at right, made from a tintype, was sent by Jo Ann Byland, Route 2, Box 24, Jack Pine Drive, Carrollton, CA 62016. She writes, "This was found in some old family pictures. It has been said it is a picture of Jesse and Frank James. The pictures that I have seen in books do look something like them."

I agree that there is some resemblance. The man on the left, especially, resembles the famous bust photo of Jesse made about 1875. But I do not feel that the resemblance is close enough to state that the men pictured are the James brothers. Perhaps some of our James authorities will comment on this.



These two men might be the James' brothers.

Little Joe. "Where might I get the full story in verse about Little Joe the Wrangler?" Marland P. Balcer, Apt. 11, 308-2nd Street, Boone, IA 50036, sent that question. He explains, "It's a story about a young man that rides into a cow camp at evening and asks to be hired on because his Pa has married twice and now he has to paddle his own canoe. They take him on as a wrangler, and then one night during a terrible storm he has to ride and help stop a stampede. The next day they find him dead where his horse has tripped and thrown him into a ravine." Balcer first heard the song in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1930.

The entire eleven verses of the poem can most readily be found in the book, *Songs of the Cowboys*, by N. Howard "Jack" Thorp, published by Clarkson N. Potter, New York, in 1966. Thorp wrote the song in 1898 while on a cattle drive from Chimney Lake, New Mexico, to Higgins, Texas. He said it was based on an actual event he had witnessed. The song also inspired a follow-up, "Little Joe the Wrangler's Sister Nell," which may have been written by Thorp as well.

Colonel Hardin? "Somewhere I got the idea that John Wesley Hardin claimed to be the son of a colonel in the Confederate Army, when in fact his father had been, perhaps, a private in that army and had deserted." Paul T. Curry, 2322 77th, Lubbock, TX 79423, asked for verification of that information.

I doubt if Hardin ever claimed his *father* was a colonel. He wrote that his father, the Reverend J.G. Hardin, had organized a company to fight for the Southern cause, was elected captain, but resigned at the solicitation of the best citizens. The elder Hardin thus stayed home and did not go to war.

dants

Hardin's great-uncle Franklin Hardin is probably the person you have in mind. He fought at San Jacinto, was appointed first lieutenant of infantry in 1836 and, later, captain. In 1841 he was selected a colonel of the Second Regiment of the Second Brigade.

Old-Time Showman. A request for information about "Death Valley Scotty" comes from M.W. Kimball, 922 Main Street, Bogalusa, LA 74027. Briefly, the Scotty story is this. His real name was Walter E. Scott, and he was born in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on September 20, 1872. He died in a tavern at Slim's Corners, Nevada, on January 5, 1954. He was on the way to a Las Vegas hospital at the time.

As a young man, Scotty was with the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show. He arrived in southern California for the first time in 1884. He married Ella Josephine McCarthy Milius, and they had one son, Walter Perry Scott.

One of Scott's more spectacular stunts was to drive a train from Los Angeles to Chicago—a distance of 2,265 miles in forty-four hours and fifty-four minutes, July 9–11, 1905. The train, known as "The Coyote Special," set a new record. In 1926, Scotty began building his "castle." Today there is a large monument near his grave.

TRUE WEST's companion publication, OLD WEST, carries an article on Scott in its Winter 1986 issue. An excellent book-length biography is Hank Johnston's *Death Valley Scotty*. It is very readable and has many good illustrations.

If you have a question, send it to Chuck Parsons, Western Publications, P O Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076. Please keep questions brief. Sign your full name and address, including zip code. Names and addresses will be published if question is used. Space limitations may not permit us to use all questions.

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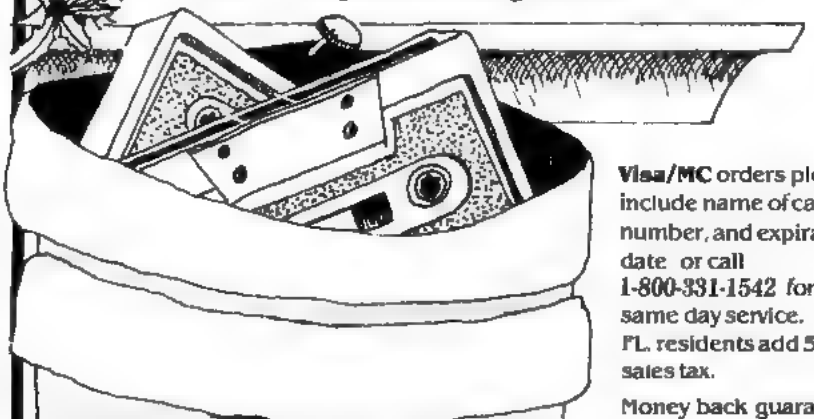

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North The Renegade

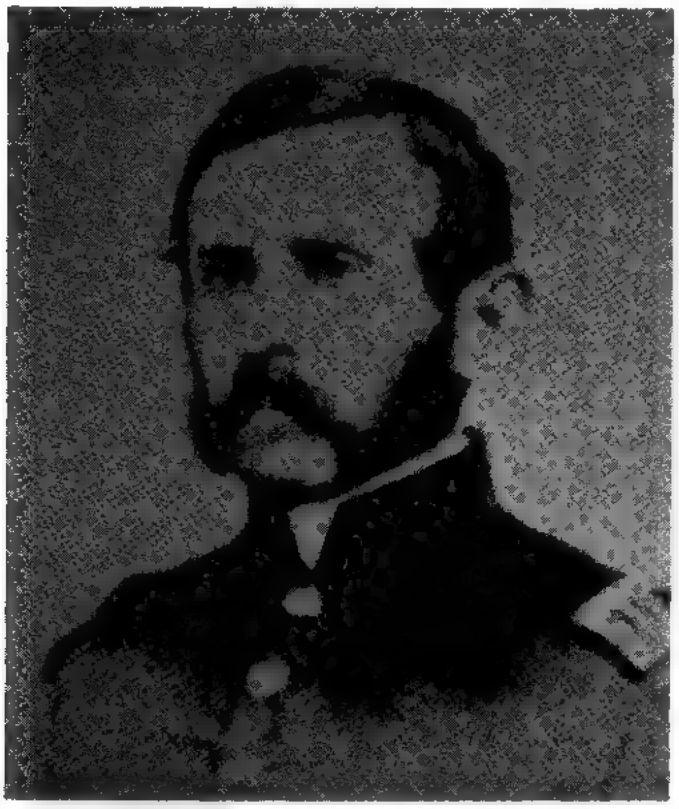
By WAYNE R. AUSTERMAN

Photos Courtesy of the Author

Pictured in the foreground and right distance of this photograph is the ridge marking the Fetterman massacre site.

A thick blue haze of powdersmoke drifted in dirty billows over the rocky spine of a Wyoming ridgeline that cold December day in 1866. The snow-draped ground was quilled with arrows and littered with dead soldiers, who sprawled slack-limbed among the small boulders clustered at the southern end of the rise. Hundreds of shrieking Indian warriors swarmed up the ridgeline in eager triumph as a few muskets fired final, futile shots into the red tide before their owners died. Captain William Fetterman's command was perishing on the lonely height, victims of their leader's rash overconfidence.

One trooper of the Eighteenth Infantry still lived among the tangled knot of bodies, an arrow jutting crookedly from his side as the blood pooled and then froze beneath him. He struggled to ram home a fresh load in his Springfield. Gasping with pain and fear, he scrabbled for a cartridge in the leather pouch at his hip, the strength already ebbing from his hands. He was lifting the powder-filled paper envelope to his teeth to tear open a corner when a shadow fell across him. The doomed trooper looked up into the eyes of a fiercely painted Arapaho brave, who was working the lever of a looted Spencer carbine. As the hammer



Captain William J. Fetterman, 18th U.S. Infantry.

fell on a rimfire cartridge, the dazed soldier had only time enough to realize that beneath the vermilion and feathers he was looking at another white man. The Spencer cracked and the infantryman died with a last despairing question stillborn on his lips.

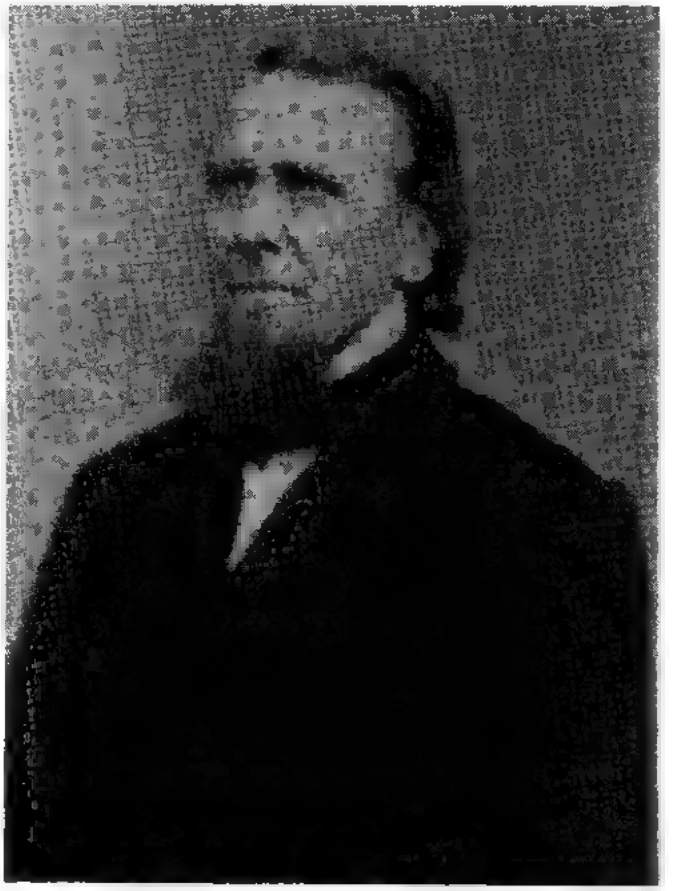
Robert North, Arapaho warrior and renegade white trader, stood above the dead bluecoat, savoring this latest visit back among his own people. Two years before he had worn the gold-trimmed shoulder straps of a captain in the Colorado volunteer cavalry. Now he stooped with knife in hand to add another scalp to those that already trimmed his buckskin warshirt.

Robert North was one of the most shadowy and elusive figures ever to live on the plains above the Arkansas. His origins were obscure, his life sketchily documented, and his death would reflect only the violent times he had helped to create. Treacherous and self-serving and quite possibly insane, North moved uneasily between two races with grinning death riding at his stirrup.

Born of uncertain antecedents, Robert North could claim no provenance but his name. Born without a thumb on his right hand, North was even more flawed in his morals and character. He claimed to have lived among the Arapaho Indians since childhood, although it was never made clear how he had come to join the tribe. As a young man, he married an Arapaho woman and later took a second wife from among the Gros Ventres, an allied tribe. North lived among his adopted kinsmen as a trader, his white skin and acceptance by the Indians giving him a rapport of sorts with both frontiersman and red man. He also acquired a reputation for brutal opportunism early in his career. There were dark rumors that in 1863 he had ambushed and murdered ten prospectors on the Yellowstone River to gain their gold, which may well have been spent on gunrunning ventures for his Indian friends.

That November found North farther to the southeast, skulking about Denver and its outlying settlements. When an Arapaho band stole some stock from a local rancher, North accompanied the settler to the Indian camp and acted as interpreter. The braves admitted their guilt and compensated the white man for his losses. The incident ended peacefully, but it inspired North to concoct a story for his own benefit. To this day, his precise motives are unclear, but the result was tragedy for hundreds of whites and Indians alike.

Riding into Denver, North sought and received an audience with John Evans, the territorial governor. The illiterate squawman then spilled out a story of evil conspiracy. The Comanches, Kiowas, Apaches, Sioux, Cheyenne, and northern Arapaho, he claimed, had met that summer on the Arkansas River below Fort Lyon. There, they had agreed to unite in a mass uprising once sufficient guns and ammunition had been obtained. The chiefs had invited North to join them in the planned assault on the settlements, but the trader had refused, piously telling Evans later that, "while I am



Governor John Evans of Colorado believed North's bogus reports of a vast Indian conspiracy and subsequently commissioned him a captain in the state militia.

connected with them by marriage and live with them I am yet a white man, and wish to avoid bloodshed."

North's story impressed the governor, as did his warning that New Mexican Comancheros were arming and inciting the tribes for raids against the Colorado frontier. He asked Evans to keep his identitity as an informer a secret, for he feared reprisals, but also assured him that he would keep the government informed of any future Indian plans.

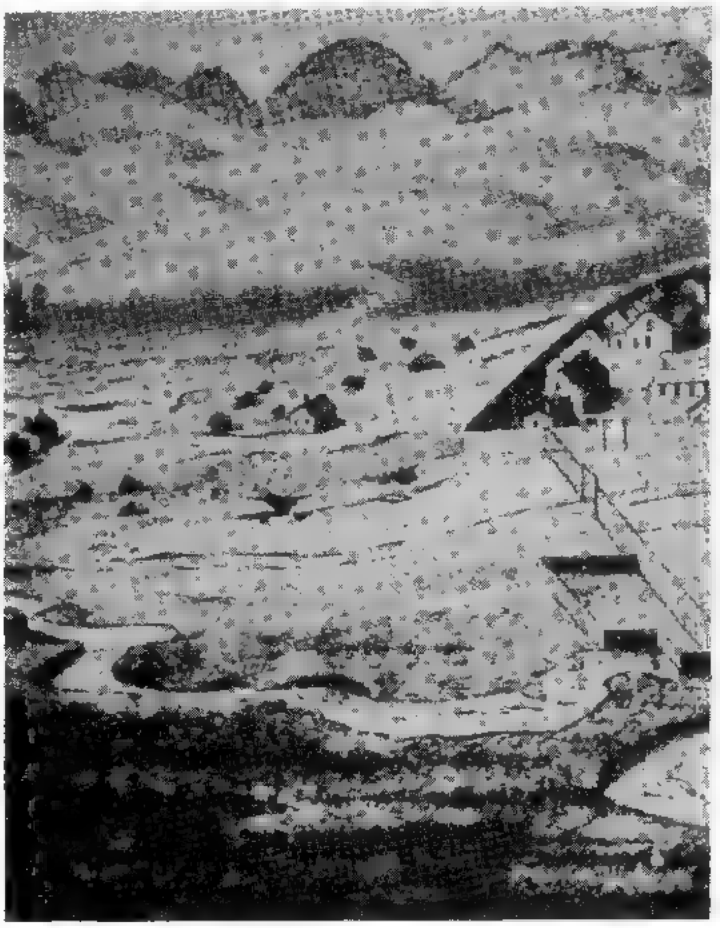
The report was a tapestry of lies and exaggerations, but it confirmed Evans' worst expectations about the Indians. There was no great alliance binding together the plains tribes. Only the Sioux and Cheyenne had agreed to wage mutual war on the whites, while the Arapahos remained aloof. Despite the Sioux and Cheyenne hostility, the situation remained unusually quiet that autumn along the Platte and Arkansas emigrant routes.

As the hammer fell on a rimfire cartridge, the dazed soldier had only time enough to realize that beneath the vermilion and feathers he was looking at another white man. The Spencer cracked and the infantryman died with a last despairing question stillborn on his lips.

Governor Evans was already alarmed by rumors of Confederate agents at work among the hostiles, and he was willing to believe virtually any report that fit his preconceptions of the burgeoning Indian threat. A summary of North's claims was immediately sent to Washington, D.C., and Evans subsequently made a personal visit to the capital in order to gain aid in meeting the coming crisis. While there he cited North as a reliable source of intelligence.

Seven months after North's report there was still no sign of a concerted Indian uprising, but the governor was begging the military authorities for more troops and arms. North must have been feeding Evans' fantasies, for he saw proof of a massive conspiracy in every minor depredation charged against the Indians. By the summer of 1864 Major John M. Chivington and the First Colorado Cavalry were shooting Indians on sight, including two Cheyenne chieftains who sought only to parley with the troops and died in a volley of carbine fire. Tensions flared and reprisals came quickly from the angry tribesmen.

IN JUNE the Arapahos killed a family of settlers near Denver and hysteria swept through the dusty streets of the clapboard settlement. North falsely asserted that Cheyennes, Kiowas, and Comanches had mounted the raid. Another trader, William McGaa, confirmed North's deceitful report, adding that the Sioux and Cheyennes had been hoarding ammunition since the previous autumn in preparation for a general offensive against the whites. Both men had plenty to gain from the outbreak of open warfare, and Evans fulfilled their fondest desires.



For a time in 1866, Fort Phil Kearney was plagued by Indian war parties. Among the warriors was the enigmatic

In late June the governor issued a proclamation that called on all peaceful Cheyennes and Arapahos to assemble in camps near Fort Lyon. He also sent North off to southern Montana in search of other Arapahos, with promises of provisions and government protection if they pledged to keep the peace. North must have made a detour to the northeast before or after his mission to Montana, for in July he appeared in Nebraska on a mysterious, if lethal, errand of his own.

North and five of his kinsmen appeared at the Pawnee agency on the Loup River and attacked a group of whites, who were cutting hay nearby. Among them was a man known only as Sam, who had earlier lived among the Arapahos. When the raiders appeared he immediately predicted his death. Seconds later he was bleeding from several mortal wounds. With his last breaths, he gasped out, "It's Bob—I thought so—I thought so." The Arapahos killed two other men and wounded a woman before leaving. No one knew why North had traveled so far to kill a former companion, but he was brazen enough to return to Colorado and accept from Evans a captain's commission in the state volunteers. Apparently none of the survivors of his Nebraska raid had been able to positively identify the white who led the braves.

The war that North had helped to foment finally erupted on November 29, 1864, when Chivington led

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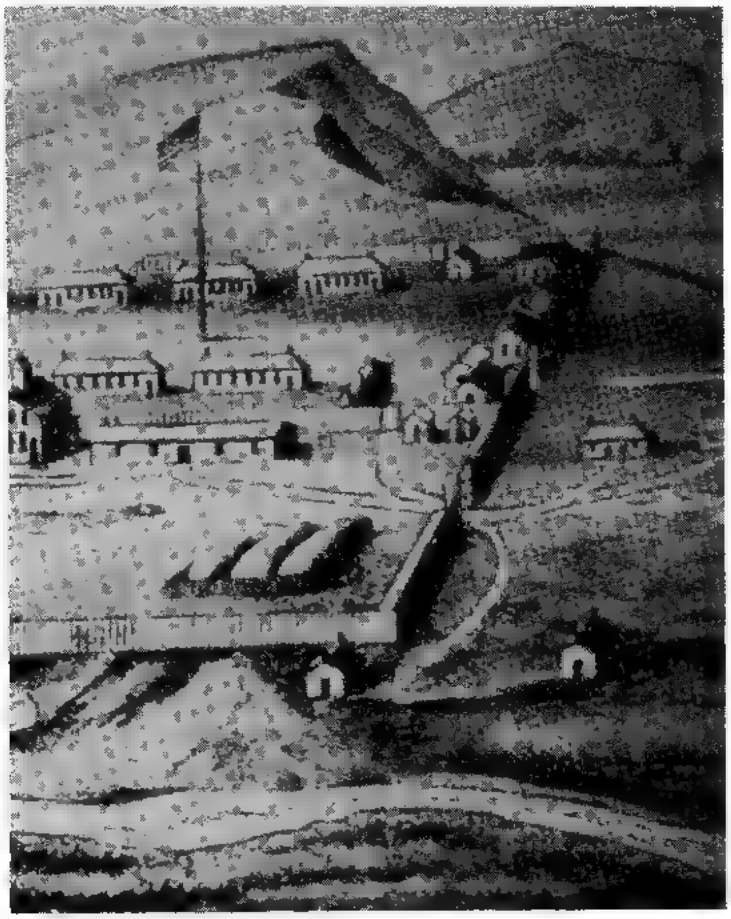


white man, Robert North.

the newly-mustered Third Colorado Cavalry in a surprise strike on the peaceful camp of Chief Black Kettle at Sand Creek. Roughly 150 Cheyennes and Arapahos died in the bloody melee that followed Chivington's attack, and Evans subsequently cited North's reports in an effort to justify his handling of Indian affairs in the territory.

Despite Chivington's brutal provocation, most of the Northern Arapahos tried to remain aloof from the hostilities that swept the Colorado and Kansas plains. Moving north of the Platte, they allied with the Sioux, while one renegade band under Chief Black Bear raided into Colorado and Nebraska in defiance of the tribe's wishes. Conflict with the military and emigrants crowding up the Bozeman Trail through Wyoming eventually drew the Arapahos back into war with the whites by the end of 1865.

North continued to move between both camps. He was present when the Arapahos drew rations at the Fort Laramie agency in the spring of 1865, but soon thereafter he was placed under arrest by the authorities and confined in the post guardhouse. By then his stock with the whites must have been running low, and he may have been suspected of gunrunning or spying for the hostiles. Somehow he either won his freedom or escaped, for by 1866 Captain North was back among his Arapaho kinsmen as they joined the Sioux in harrying the troops at the Bozeman Trail posts.

In the summer of 1866 the Eighteenth Infantry sallied northwestward from Fort Laramie to build Fort Reno, Fort Phil Kearny, and Fort C.F. Smith along that disputed thoroughfare. On September 21 Lieutenant Winfield S. Matson led a detachment of forty men out from Fort Phil Kearny and was soon pinned down a short distance west of the post by an estimated 300 warriors. There was a sharp little fight until a relief party sortied from the fort amid a confused, disjointed action with the bluecoats.

SUDDENLY Matson was face to face with a white man garbed in buckskins, who calmly identified himself as Captain Bob North. He seemed to find nothing incongruous about his presence among the hostiles and moved off before the officer could recover from his surprise. Shortly afterwards the Indians attacked a contractor's wagon train on the road to the north, killing three men.

North appeared again the next day as the braves used the cover of a rainstorm to stampede nearly a hundred head of cattle from within sight of the fort. Captain Frederick Brown led a pursuing party on a thirteen-mile chase that culminated in a lengthy skirmish with the raiders. Led by a white man who swore volubly, the Indians charged the troops repeatedly. A bullet finally hit the renegade, spilling him from the saddle. He was quickly carried off by his comrades and Brown retrieved the stolen stock in triumph. Colonel Carrington reported with great satisfaction that "Captain Brown and a few men charged the Indians with revolvers, killing 5 Indians and 1 white man, I think Bob North, who has led them in every case."

Carrington was wrong. If it were North who was shot that day, he quickly recovered from the wound and remained among the defiant tribesmen. In October

His origins were obscure, his life sketchily documented, and his death would reflect only the violent times he had helped to create. Treacherous and self-serving and quite possibly insane, North moved uneasily between two races with grinning death riding at his stirrup.

a group of Cheyennes visited the post and confirmed to the colonel that North had been among the Sioux since August, haranguing them and the Arapahos to kill the whites. The "Big Medicine Man of the Arapahos" seemed determined to keep this new war raging by whatever means possible. Scout Jim Bridger also relayed reports from friendly Crow tribesmen that the white traitor was among the hostiles.

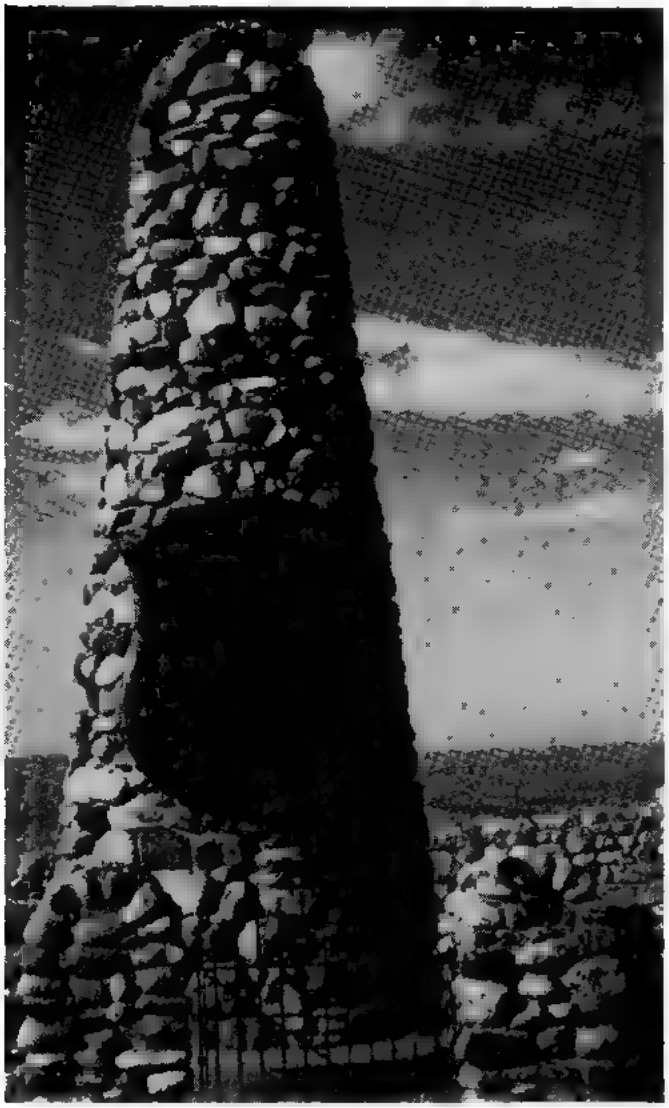
North's wound must have healed quickly, for in December he and his Arapahos joined the Sioux and Cheyennes in ambushing Captain William J. Fetterman's patrol but a few miles north of Fort Phil Kearny. Captain Brown was with the doomed detachment

that fateful December 21, and North could well have savored the satisfaction of lifting that officer's scalp in retaliation for the October shooting.

After the Fetterman disaster and the soldiers' subsequent withdrawal from all of the Bozeman Trail forts in Wyoming, North faded back into obscurity among his relatives. He may have tried the Indians' patience, for although his progressing madness marked him as one who stood in close communion with the Great Spirit, he apparently was never able to win a place of true prominence in their camps. The Cheyenne half-breed George Bent described him as a "miserable white man who had been loafing around the Arapaho camp, living on the Indians."

North evidently managed to antagonize the Sioux, for by the spring of 1869 he was on the dodge from that tribe. In late April a passenger on a steamboat plying the upper Missouri, Joseph Henry Taylor, saw a man and two Indian squaws on a sand bank as the craft paused to take on wood. The curious traveler strode over to the trio and spoke to the man. Making no reply, the man simply drew a dagger, thrust it point upwards against the sky and said, "There is the moon."

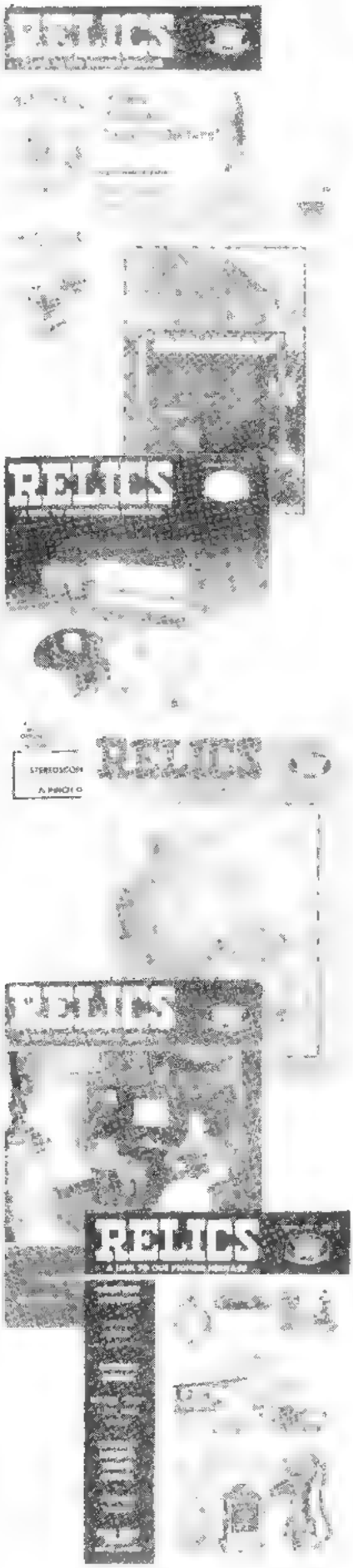
Colonel Henry B. Carrington.



A monument was erected in 1908, on the Fetterman massacre site south of Sheridan, Wyoming.

One of the women tapped her finger to her forehead, signifying that her companion was crazy. Taylor returned to the steamboat, chilled with the certainty that he had just met "the murderous white chief," for the hand that gripped the dagger lacked a thumb. He later learned that North was eking out a living by having his two sturdy wives chop wood for sale to the passing riverboats.

SOON AFTER his meeting with Taylor, the crazed outcast drifted south in search of his Arapaho wife's people. By October they were in Kansas, where they were recognized by a group of Indian-hating settlers. North was lynched on the spot, along with his spouse, "who fought with the fury of a hyena and shared her white husband's merited doom." So ended the bloody, if ill documented, career of a man who had lived uneasily among two races and cultures, only to betray them both. His fascination for modern students of the West lies simply in the depth of his perversity. As one modern chronicler of his sordid career has noted, "North was a man between two worlds and died as he had lived, an alien in both."



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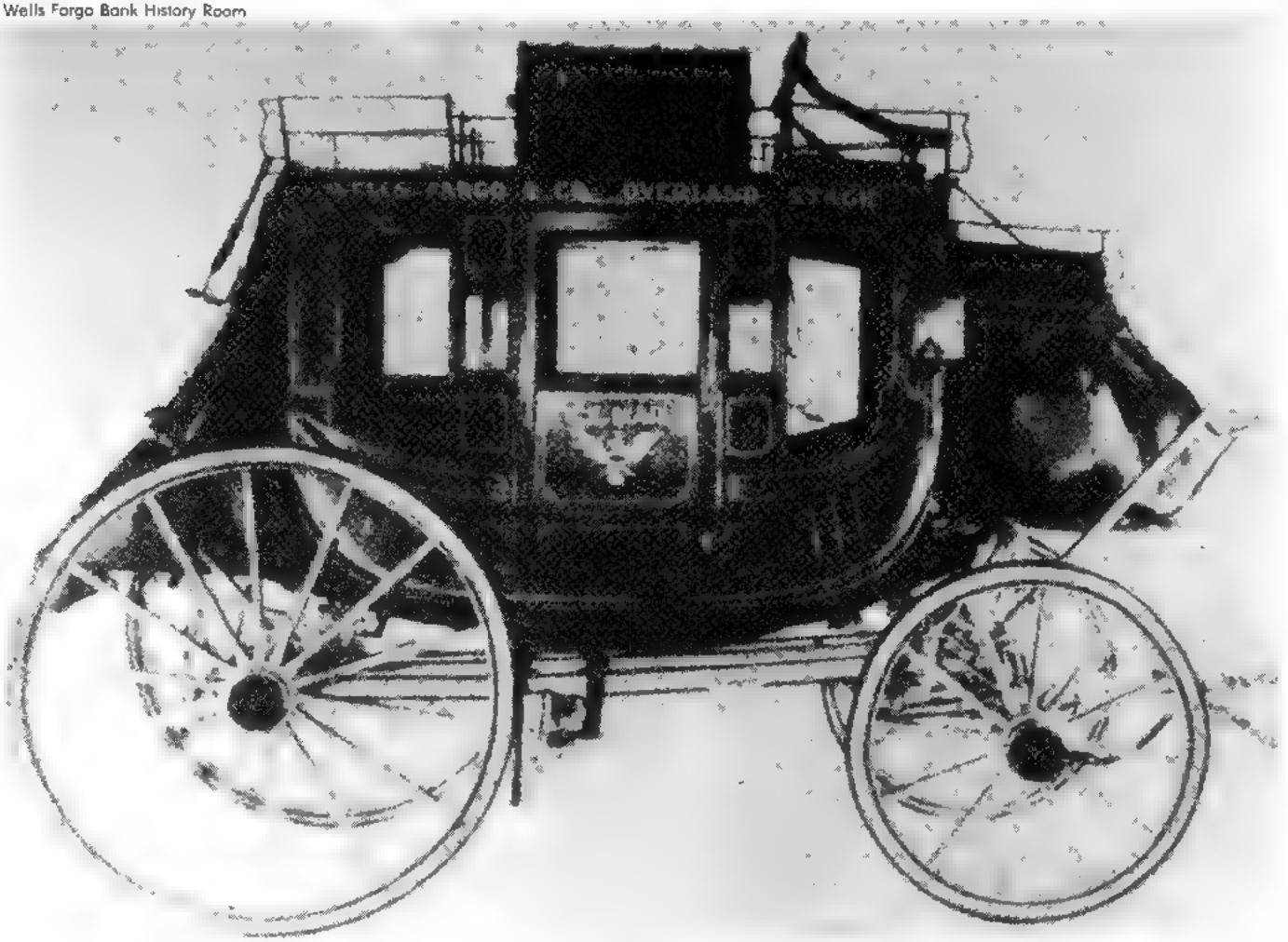
By RICHARD PATTERSON

HIGHWAY ROBB

Hollywood has given us a stereotype of the western stagecoach robbery. A band of mounted outlaws hiding behind a boulder just off the trail pull up their bandanas as the stage appears in the distance. They draw their six-guns, steady their horses, and patiently wait until the stage is almost abreast. Then they dash toward it, whooping and shooting. The stage passes them, the driver hunkers down and whips his horses, and the guard riding "shotgun" turns and fires at the attackers. The chase nearly always ends with the guard being hit and then the driver. The team slows and one of the robbers grabs the lead horse's bridle. The Wells Fargo box is tossed down, opened, and the bandits ride off, richer for the effort. Occasionally there is a variation to the ending: the driver, despite his wounds, manages to keep the careening coach on the trail, and the guard picks off enough of the pursuers to persuade the rest to give up the chase.

A few stages may have been attacked that way—but not many. Seldom was a stagecoach chased. Outlaw and driver alike were well aware that a couple of bullets into one of the horses would bring the coach to a halt in an instant. The only time a driver would risk a chase was on a narrow trail when the bandits were clearly behind the coach and could not, because of the terrain, get a clear shot at the horses. In such terrain, few would-be robbers were dumb enough to

The Wells Fargo stagecoach of the late nineteenth century was a popular target for robbers.
Wells Fargo Bank History Room



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let a stagecoach pass them by. Stagecoaches were challenged from the front at well-selected spots: at the top of a steep hill when the horses were tired, or at a narrow turn where the team had to come almost to a complete stop.

Whether a robbery would be successful usually was determined within the first thirty seconds. The bandits suddenly would step out into the trail, startling the team of the approaching coach. If there were a guard on board, he would find three or four rifles pointing at him. Only the foolhardy would try to resist or attempt a dash to safety.

The ease with which a stagecoach could be robbed, if done properly, was exemplified by the most successful highwayman of them all—Black Bart. Nobody knows for sure how many coaches Bart held up during his eight-year career as a road agent. Wells Fargo records show that he probably was responsible for twenty-eight, mostly in northern California between 1875 and 1883. According to the express company's records, Bart's first haul was on July 25, 1875. It took place four miles northeast of the little California town of Copperopolis in Calaveras County on what is now California Highway 4. His last, it is believed, was on November 3, 1883, on the same trail just a mile away from the scene of his first. In the years between, Bart rode off with about $40,000 from Wells Fargo strongboxes. The amount may not seem like a whole lot, but it was not bad considering that the days of the big gold shipments were over.

BART PROVED that even a single bandit, if he selected his time and place wisely, could make a living at stage robbery. Bart almost always stopped his coaches at the top of a steep hill when the horses were winded. He would step out of a hiding place waving a shotgun with the command, "Throw down the box!" The driver nearly always complied. Bart also was successful because he was not greedy. He spaced his holdups well apart in both time and distance. If Wells Fargo knew when and where he was going to strike it could have stopped him easily. A coach filled with armed guards could have blown a lone bandit into eternity. But to fortify every run on every line in northern California would have cost the company more than Bart was stealing.

When the end finally came for Bart it was by accident: during the November 1883 holdup he was winged by a nineteen-year-old boy who had hitched a ride on the stage to go deer hunting in the mountains. Bart

Wells Fargo Bank History Room

Arizona stage robber Bill Brazelton's area of operation included the "Cactus Forest" northwest of Tucson, where by moonlight, he sometimes used giant saguaro cacti to give the impression that confederates were helping him

escaped but left a silk handkerchief at the scene. It later was traced to him through a laundry mark.

Some outlaw enthusiasts credit Black Bart with originating stagecoach robbery in California. Actually, Bart was a late arrival. Stagecoaches were being held up in the gold country in the early 1850s. Although most of Wells Fargo's records were destroyed in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, company historians say the firm first fell victim to a California road agent in 1861, near Placerville in Eldorado County at a relay point known as Strawberry Station. Three bandits struck just as the team was being changed; they rode off with about $3,000 in gold. The stage was loaded with passengers, but they offered no resistance and turned over their own money and valuables at the robbers' orders.

Passengers seldom fared well when they made trouble for stage robbers. In California that lesson was learned early—in 1856 on the route from Camptonville to Marysville in Yuba County just southwest of where the county road to Dobbins now joins California Highway 49. In August of that year, six bandits tried to rob a local stage carrying almost $100,000 in gold, but the coach slipped by them when the driver took a cutoff. As the bandits raced to catch up, several passengers opened fire from inside. The outlaws returned the fire and three passengers were hit. One,

the wife of a Marysville banker, later died.

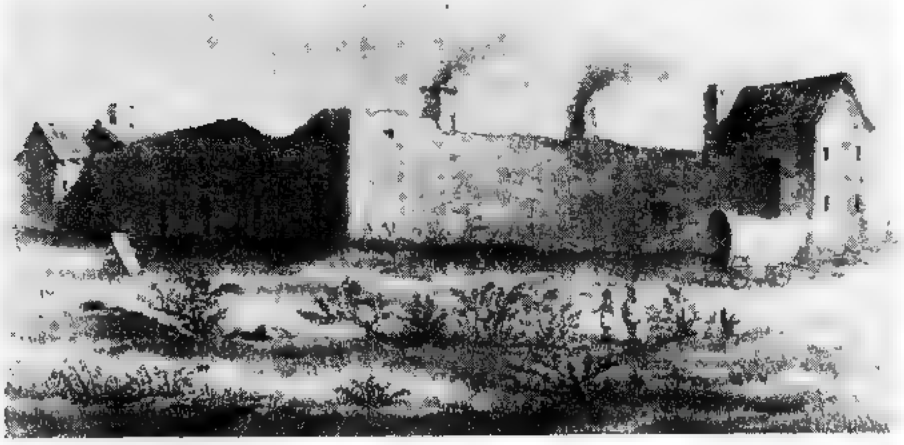
But California does not hold the record for the most tragic shootout during a stagecoach robbery. In July 1865 near the site of old Fort Hall, Idaho, six or seven bandits halted a southbound stage carrying eight passengers, nearly all of whom foolishly tried to shoot it out with the attackers. Four passengers were killed outright. Two managed to escape in the underbrush. When the smoke cleared, a seventh passenger, a man named William Carpenter, lay on the floor of the coach in the midst of his dead comrades. Although uninjured, he was so covered with the blood of his fellow travelers the bandits assumed he was nearly finished and honored his pleas to let him die in peace. Another passenger, William Brown, lay beneath him, wounded badly but still alive. Carpenter pleaded with the bandits to spare Brown's life also; Carpenter claimed he would need Brown's help in his dying moments. The bandits obliged and busied themselves with opening the strongbox.

The granddaddy of all stagecoach robberies took place in Yellowstone National Park in 1914. By then most stage lines had closed down. But in Yellowstone the Park Service operated a busy excursion line for tourists during the summer months. The robbery or, more accurately, robberies involved fifteen stagecoaches and were accomplished by just two men: Ed Trafton, a small-time outlaw from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and a local man named Charles Erpenback.

Trafton and Erpenback chose to rob the Yellowstone stage line for two reasons: the coaches were packed with sightseers carrying cash and valuables, and park rules prohibited visitors from carrying firearms. The robbers selected as their holdup site a spot near Shoshone Point on the trail leading to the Old Faithful Inn. As the first coach of the morning slowed for the point, Trafton, his face hidden by a bandana, stepped from behind a boulder and pointed a rifle at the driver.

Hat Creek Station, on the Wyoming-South Dakota border

After warning the passengers that another robber had them covered from a nearby hiding place, Trafton ordered them out of the coach in single file. One by one, as they passed by, they were made to drop their money and valuables into a sack. When they had finished, Trafton ordered them back into the coach and commanded the driver to pull around the point and



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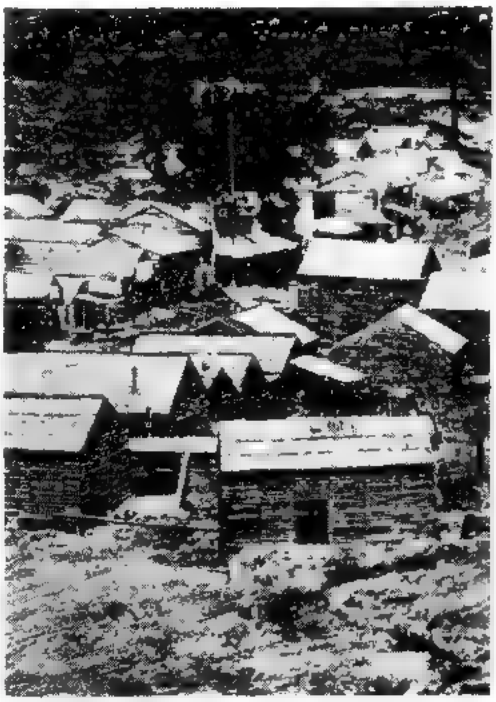


At Old Fort Hall, Idaho, (above) the bloodiest stage holdup in Idaho history occurred in July 1895. The first holdup of a Wells Fargo stage occurred near Placerville, California, (right) in September 1861.

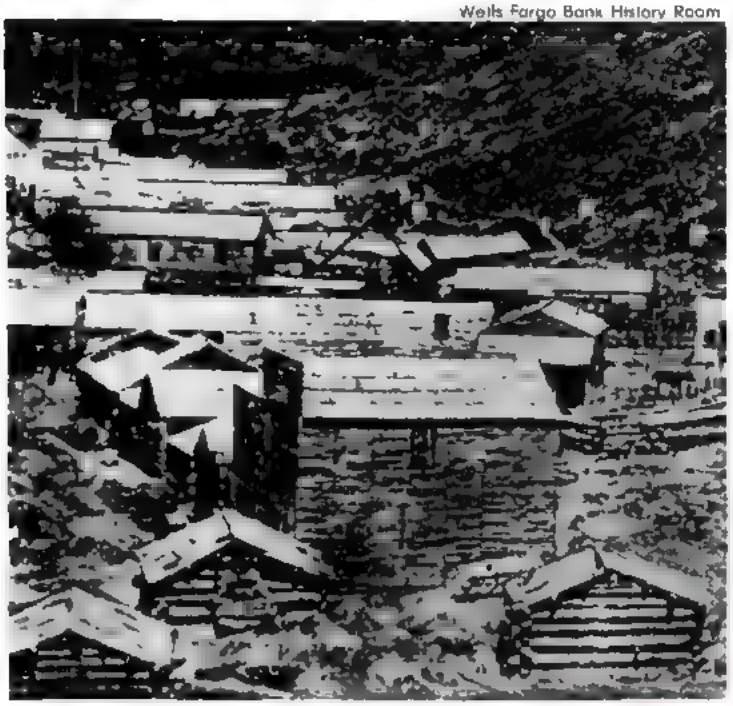
was the scene of a typical stage station of the 1870s.

American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

out of sight, after reminding him that he would be shot by the hidden gunman if he tried to drive off. Minutes later the second coach arrived and the scene was repeated. Within an hour, fifteen coaches fell victim to Trafton and his confederate. Both men escaped, but eventually were caught and imprisoned.

While Ed Trafton was indeed a nervy bandit, that

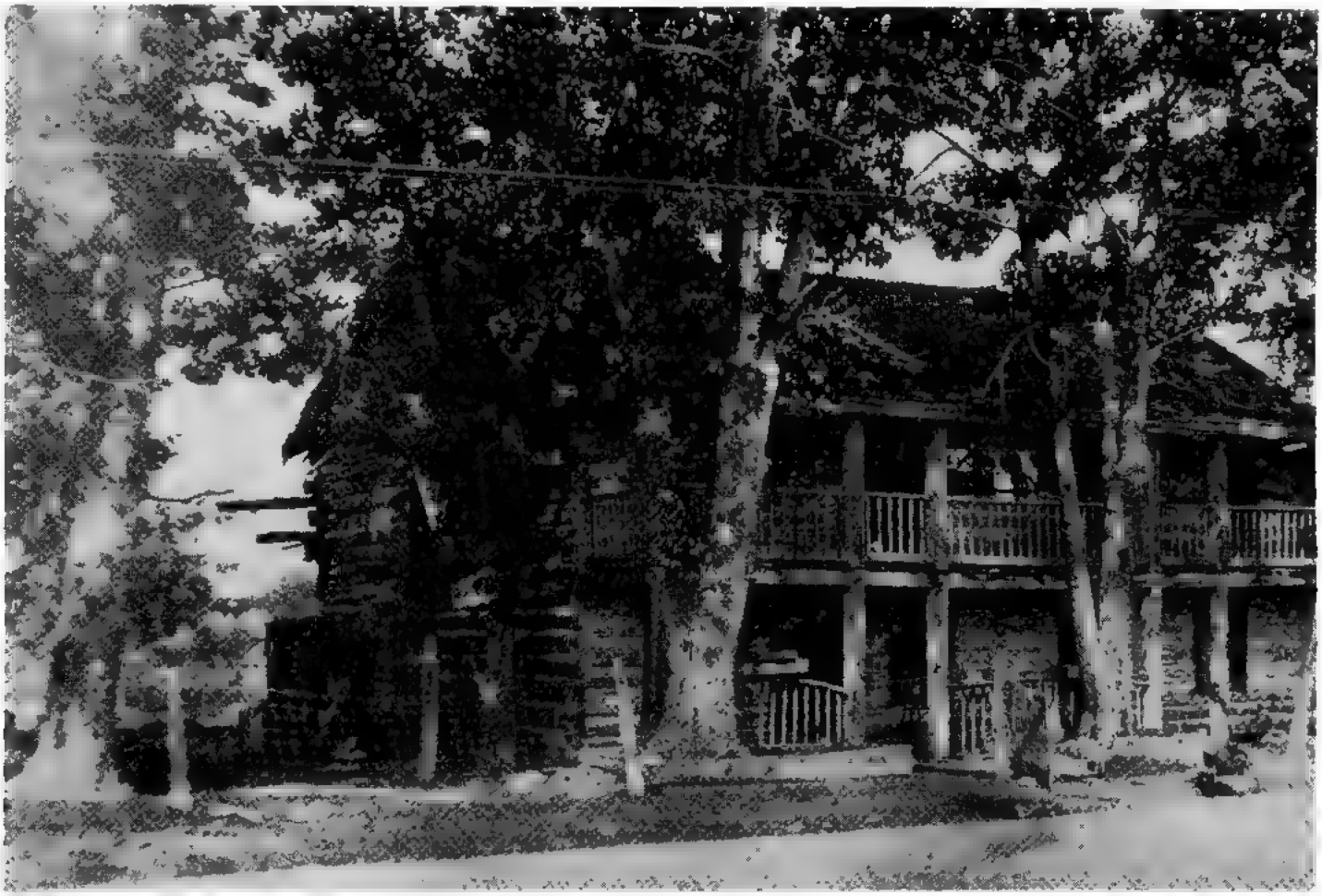
Wells Fargo Bank History Room



title might better be applied to a Nevada stagecoach robber name Nicanor "Nick" Rodrigues. The story is still told around Reno and Virginia City how Rodrigues once stole three gold bricks off a moving stage without anyone's being the wiser. One day Nick saw the bricks being loaded into the front boot as the stage was preparing to leave Reno. He quickly bought a ticket and asked to sit beside the driver. While the driver's eyes searched the trail for bandits, Nick removed several of the bricks and dropped them off the side. Later, he rented a buggy and retrieved them.

But for ingenuity in stage robbery, high marks go to an Idaho bandit named "Stove Pipe Sam." The year was 1869, and the site was near a stop called Desert Station about two miles east of Twin Falls on what is now U.S. Highway 30. Sam, a newcomer to the holdup business, was not sure a lone bandit could convince a stage driver to rein up. So he rigged two lifelike dummies out of sagebrush, old clothes, and driftwood, and propped them up just off the trail. As the stage slowly rounded a bend, Sam stepped out and ordered the driver to halt and throw down the box. The driver complied and drove off, leaving $1,500 in bagged gold dust at Sam's feet.

Sam was not the only road agent to use phantom partners. In the mid-1880s, an Arizona outlaw, Bill Brazelton, worked the trail north of Tucson in an area near Picacho called the "Cactus Forest." Brazelton, another "lone bandit," attacked the stages at night,



Robbers Roost on the old stage trail at Laurin, Montana, between Virginia City and Bannack was a favorite hangout for road agents.

where in the eerie desert moonlight it was easy to mistake the giant saguaro cactus for a man. Brazelton apparently could persuade a jittery driver to throw off the box because he was never sure the robber was not accompanied by a host of confederates.

Many stagecoach companies tried to discourage robberies with teams of armed guards, but the Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Company went one step better. In 1878 it introduced the "Treasure Coach," a special Concord line with $^{5}/_{16}$" steel plates capable of withstanding rifle slugs fired from as close as fifty feet. Two portholes in the doors allowed guards to fire from inside. Nicknamed the "Monitor," the battlewagon could always be halted by shooting the horses, but the armed guards, with a generous supply of ammunition, were expected to hold off attackers until help arrived.

In the beginning the idea seemed sound. But four months after the Monitor went into service it failed its first major test. On September 26, 1878, the heavy coach pulled into the Black Hills' Canyon Springs station. As the driver reined up, a rifle bullet sent the outside guard toppling to the ground. Next, a shot through the top of the coach disabled one of the two inside guards. (The top of the coach was not armorplated.) That unnerved the second inside guard, and he fled into a nearby woods as, apparently, did the driver. The bandits, left alone with the treasure, went to work on the strongbox and escaped with $27,000.

While the Monitor failed its test, it was indirectly responsible for bringing an end to stage robbery as a way of life in the Black Hills. The Treasure Coach's defeat so angered local commercial interests that vigilante groups with unofficial assistance from peace officers rounded up every suspected robber they could lay their hands on. Convictions followed, legal and otherwise, including a few hangings. From then on, until the coming of the railroad, the stages rolled virtually unmolested in the Black Hills.

NO CHRONICLE of the stage robbery era is complete without mention of the "disappearing stagecoach," a mystery that has yet to be solved. On a hot June night in 1880, a stage left Beale Spring, Arizona, bound for Needles, California. The site of what was the Beale Spring station is about two miles west of Kingman, in Mohave County. Four men saw the coach leave the station. It is believed that it later was stopped by three bandits, one of whom was "Hualapai Joe" Desredo. But nobody is sure. The stage never arrived at Needles. It has still not been found. Shortly after its disappearance, the outlaw Desredo and his two partners were killed in a gunfight. Before he died, the bandit admitted holding up the stage. He said he and his men took the strongbox,

Montana Historical Society

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Virginia City, Nevada, was a mecca for road agents who roamed the Comstock area in the 1880s.

which was filled with gold, and buried it in the desert. But he denied harming the driver or the passengers. After taking the box, Desredo said, he told driver Johnny "Jumpup" Upshaw to proceed to Needles, and the stage started off. But then, according to Desredo, a strange thing happened. As the stage departed, the bandit said he "could hear the wheels cracking against rocks and Johnny Jumpup yelling at his team." But all at once, said Desredo, "I couldn't hear the stage wheels and Johnny Jumpup yelling no more." The stage just "vanished into nowhere."

Many doubted Desredo's story, but then again when he told it he knew he was dying. So, some asked, why would he lie? The area was searched, including the spot where Desredo and his men were supposed to have buried the box. Nothing was found. Somewhere out in the desert there may still lie the remains of the stage and a fortune in gold. According to one account, the shipment, in 1880 dollars, was worth $200,000.

Arizona appears to be the place to look for buried stagecoach treasure. In May 1881, two U.S. Mail bags containing $15,000 in gold and silver were stolen from a stage between Flagstaff and Canyon Diablo. Army troopers tracked the robbers to a cabin in the mountains near Flagstaff, near an area called Veit Spring. A shootout followed and all five suspects were killed. According to the report of the officer in charge, the area was carefully searched but the bags were not found. In the summer of 1913 a local man turned up in a Flagstaff saloon with some of the coins from the shipment, but he died soon after without telling where he found them. Several townsmen located the dead man's camp in the mountains, but found no trace of the loot. Treasure seekers around Flagstaff are still searching.

An even larger treasure may lie buried somewhere near an old stage stop called Pine Springs deep in Coconino National Forest southeast of Flagstaff. In 1879 four robbers took $225,0000 in gold coins from a coach at Pine Springs. Lawmen were nearby, however, and they trapped the outlaws at the station before they could escape. After an overnight seige, the posse closed in and all four robbers were killed. The gold, however, was not found.

Possibly the most sought-after lost stage loot lies buried in or around Genoa, Nevada. For years the story has circulated that a wooden keg filled with stolen gold coins was buried "at the foot of a certain pine tree" near Genoa and never recovered. For those who are interested, Genoa, which in the early days was called Mormon Station, is in Douglas County, due south of Carson City.

The Best Ch

By HELEN BUTLER

The Best Christmas came after World War I was over and Mother didn't have to "Hooverize." She could buy plenty of white sugar and white flour again. During the war, while our country sent food to starving allies, sugar had soared to a dollar a pound, and flour was so doctored with substitutes that Mother said she saw no point in trying to do the impossible. She could not make Christmas delicacies out of what was available after Herbert Hoover, under President Wilson, did away with most of her ingredients.

Mother's gift to everyone was her individual boxes of candy, which she made with amazing artistry—not just ordinary fudge and peanut brittle but chocolate creams, heavenly divinity, coconut marshmallows, turkish delight, colored mints, penouche, brittle taffy, nougats, and candied peel. Where, and how she learned to make such things we never questioned or wondered. She just knew without such a thing as a thermometer that something was done when it spun a hair or dropped off a spoon just right. Some nights she stayed up long after the rest of the family was in bed so she could bring all of the lamps to the kitchen for the best light and privacy to practice her art.

We kids, of course, didn't know what war was. Father said he hoped to God we never would have to find out. If he had his way, no American soldier would

ristmas

In the heat of the coal stove the tree scented the whole house. We covered it with strings of popcorn and paper chains, but when it came to candles, Father put his foot down: too likely to burn the house up.

ever be sent to fight the wars of Europe—or, more specifically, the wars of Queen Victoria's grandchildren. To us, war was Germans—Huns—in pointed helmets and with bayoneted guns. There were a few German families in Lander. We went to school with their children, who always seemed like the rest of us until one day their fathers were made to kiss the American flag on the post office steps. "Just some more war foolishness," Father said. But there were nights when we went to bed smothered by fear of something 5,000 miles away which had suddenly come closer to home.

The war finally ended and we had another holiday to celebrate—Armistice Day, when we could see a parade, hear speeches and a band, and see a flag display. Mother's spirits rose almost immediately. Sugar was still scarce and high, but she started making her Christmas candies right after Thanksgiving. She said we could sing holiday hymns with real meaning now—peace on earth and no more war talk, no more black crepe on the doors of homes where young soldiers had died in France and Germany.

War, however, was not the only cause of death. There was the awful contagion called Spanish influenza. As far as we children could tell, it was an extremely bad cold, the fever and chest kind from which many people did not recover. Colds, with coughs and sniffly noses, were a part of our winter life, like the layers of ice and snow over which we traveled for six or seven months of the year.

The thing to be avoided at all cost was the awful pneumonia, for which, like rattlesnake bite, there was no cure. People took great precautions and used all the known remedies in addition to prayers for divine intervention. For coughing there were onion syrup and kerosene sprinkled on sugar. Goose grease and turpentine were rubbed on the chest and covered with flannel when the cold went down in the lungs. Sad irons and hot bricks were put at a patient's feet to make him sweat. He sniffed eucalyptus oil in hot steam through a paper cone off the spout of the tea kettle—a primitive version of the modern vaporizer—and he got nothing but chicken broth when he could take nourishment.

Pregnant women were especially vulnerable to the flu, but Mother delivered her last child at its height and none of us caught the infection. Schools closed. People quit going to church and lodge and even visiting each other. Funerals were sparsely attended. The telephone, even with its overloaded party lines, became a godsend. And a special medicine finally made its appearance in the drugstores to raise everyone's hopes for survival. It was "Liberdol," a thick black ointment in a pound jar for $5.00. Father bought a box just in case but said it was probably not much different from axle grease except for its cost and evil smell.

That year of the best Christmas Father had given up the foolish idea of paying rent for a house in town while we went to school. He bought some raw land two miles west of town on the road to Fort Washakie and the Indian Reservation. Except in bad weather, when we rode horseback or Father took us in the wagon (if he were not at the ranch) we walked to school. Father moved an assortment of stray buildings on the place, plowed and planted in season, and then disappeared back to the Beaver for long weeks at a time.

With some hired help and the help of us children, Mother tried her best to adapt to farm life, but it was obvious she preferred living in town. We kept a cow, she made butter, and we managed to raise a few chickens, turkeys, and geese. One year she raised some ducks and guineas but when the hawks carried off the young ones she was too discouraged to try a second hatching. The real devastation and tears came when she mistakenly allowed the kerosene heater under the incubator to get too hot and smother all of her fluffy day-old chicks. It was their suffering, not the monetary loss, that undid her. She never lived down what Father teasingly called her special recipe for smothered chicken.

Father was not much of a carpenter or house builder. At that point in her marriage, Mother faced the fact, at last, that Father was not house conscious. In

Illustrations By
Al Martin Napoletano

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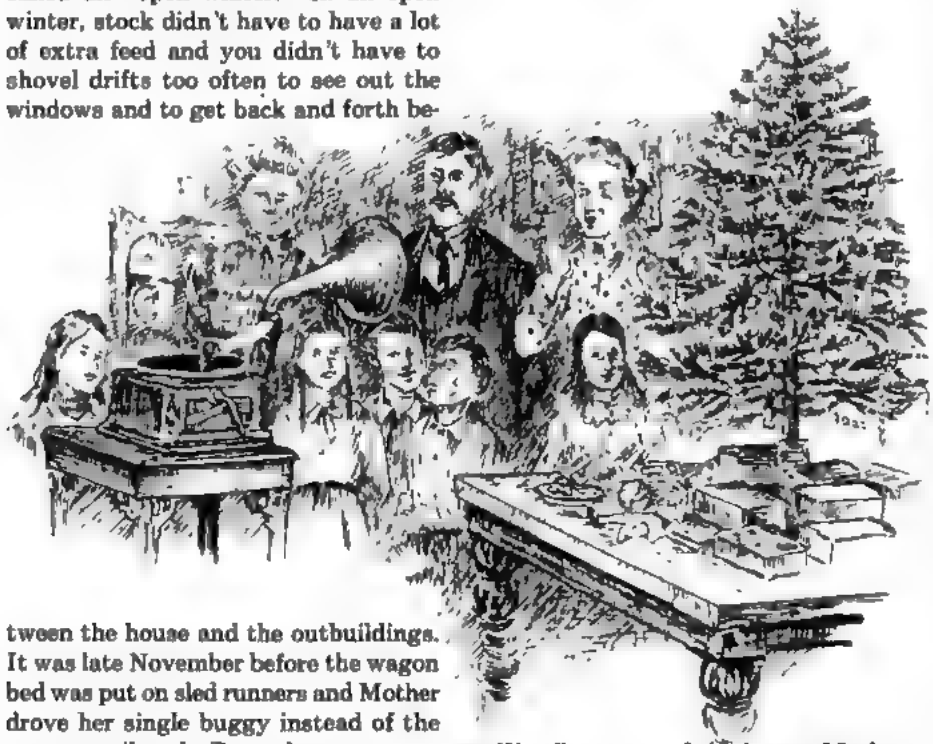
good weather he was just as happy, or happier, depending on the peace and quiet, in a tent as in a tight shelter, with or without decor. He had spent too many years in what he called "The Big Bedroom"—the open range with his saddle horse and a pack animal. But with the coming of a fourth child, the farm house had to be enlarged.

Uncle Will Peyton was a good carpenter, and Father hired him. Between the two of them they added another bedroom and a log kitchen with room for eating and for the big Economy King milk separator Father ordered from Sears Roebuck. Few machines caught Father's fancy, but the milk separator did. He never had to wash the thing—that task fell to us children—and for the small amount of milk we produced Mother preferred pans, and a skimmer. But for Father there was a strange fascination in the winding up and the winding down whine of the whirring discs. Needless to say, when he was gone, it was seldom used.

Father had numerous harsh names for Wyoming winters, but this year of the Best Christmas was what he loosely called an "open winter." In an open winter, stock didn't have to have a lot of extra feed and you didn't have to shovel drifts too often to see out the windows and to get back and forth between the house and the outbuildings. It was late November before the wagon bed was put on sled runners and Mother drove her single buggy instead of the cutter until early December.



Christmas Day was bright and clear. It had thawed a little the day before, enough to insure good ice on the creek after the nightly freeze. We kids hoped for new Sears Roebuck skates, the clamp-on kind. The Peytons were coming to our house for goose dinner. They would bring part of the food; Mother and Aunt Maye had talked it all over on our new telephone, which rang Central in town with one quick turn of the crank. We would initiate the new part of the house.

The new kitchen had windows that slid sideways instead of up and down. It had bright green and brown floral linoleum, a built-in wood and coal box, and plenty of room for overcoats and overshoes. We still had to carry water in and out of a big storage barrel at the back door, but what country house didn't? It had a new wood smell and it was beautiful despite the unfinished logs inside. With a lamp and clock shelf and a big storage cupboard, what more could Mother ask for?

The truly great surprise came when the Peyton family arrived just before noon. They chugged into the yard in a Model T Ford, which looked like a small black delivery wagon. Uncle Will sat on the high front seat steering, with Aunt Maye beside him wrapped in an extra woolen shawl that covered her head, hat and all. The cousins jumped down from the truck bed, whooping and hollering and fighting with each other to be the first ones to squeeze the brass mounted horn.

We all ran out of the house; Mother shivered in her good dress and best apron, saying, "Why for pity sakes! Why, Maye, why didn't you tell me? My goodness, what a surprise!" Uncle Will was partially deaf. He talked as though everyone else had the same problem, especially when he was excited. He grinned and handed plump Aunt Maye down to the ground, saying, "Maye here doesn't think I know how to drive yet, but I got us here, didn't I? Eh?"

"Yes, and I'm mighty glad to have my feet on the ground, I can tell you," Aunt Maye answered tartly but with noticeable pride. "I thought we were going to slide off Squaw Creek bridge, but we didn't I still don't know why!"

Father had come up from the cellar, where he was sprouting potatoes. He was still chewing his breakfast toothpick. He walked around the little truck and then said to Uncle Will—probably thinking of the wages he had paid him to work on the house—"A fool and his money are soon parted!" If Uncle Will heard him, he made no sign. The two men regularly hurled insults at each other like ball players warming up for a friendly game. For better or for worse, they had married sisters who were never happy apart. They were stuck with each other.

Making several trips, we children helped to carry Aunt Maye's food in with much instruction not to drip or spill. She had brought pumpkin pies, a big white nut cake, raisin bread, Waldorf salad, and a pan of baked parsnips. There were cans from all the shelves of things she had put up during the summer and fall—peas, green beans, carrots, kraut, beets, tomatoes, relishes, pickles, jams, and jellies. And there were fruits—spiced apples, raspberries, and strawberries—because Uncle Will believed the Lander Valley could produce anything if you put your mind to it and irrigated. Aunt Maye's Christmas gifts came in Mason jars, and there was something very special about the way she sweetened and spiced.

Mother, being the candy maker, had the problem of finding the right kind of boxes for everyone's portion and then lining them with wax paper. From one Christmas to the next Mother saved, scrounged, and planned her containers. Nothing was much more of a family felony than doing away with a box which had potential for what Uncle Will called "Lillie's Delights." If some of the boxes were too obviously dried cod fish or fruit boxes, Mother painted or pasted colored paper over them or used her wood burning set to create a scene over the offensive words.

The most elegant boxes, of course, were cigar boxes which Mother painstakingly deodorized with ammonia and peppermint oil. An old tool box lined with newspapers and sunk in a snowdrift on the north side of the house was Mother's candy vault. It was a strong point of honor that we could lift the lid to look but never pilfer. It was enough during the exciting days before

LICE TO UNZ.ORG
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Christmas that Mother saved the pans for us to lick and then wash, and that she gave us all of the crumbly or unsightly pieces.

On Christmas day, all of the boxes were stacked around the tree, which stood on the big library table in the living room. Father had cut the tree, a little juniper, along our creek bank. In the heat of the coal stove it scented the whole house. We covered it with strings of popcorn and paper chains, but when it came to candles, Father put his foot down: too likely to burn the house up. The Catholics in town were great on candles, he said. If we wanted candles we could go celebrate with them. We never argued with Father, but his logic lost water when year after year none of the churches with their ceiling-high trees and blazing beautiful candles never melted to the ground. We were not members of any church. Perhaps they had a special dispensation in which we could not share.

But we had our own dispensation. We were very healthy and lucky. Nothing catastrophic touched us—no war, no flu, no awful accidents such as happened to other people.

Father always came home from the ranch just when Mother was about to decide a horse had fallen with him and she should send someone to look for him. This particular year we did have a bad fright. Only two days before Christmas Father drove to the Hudson mines for a load of good, long-burning coal to bank fires with. It was fifteen miles to the mine. He left before daylight with the heavy wagon and a four-horse team.

The weather was good. The roads were packed and the horses well shod. He should have been home by sundown at the latest. Mother held supper. It got dark and cold, stinging cold. Finally, we ate. We talked about all the reasons for his delay. It was an anxious meal. What if he had taken the cutoff he mentioned and the wagon had overturned? Such things happened. Bedtime came, but Mother let us stay up and worry with her.

Several times we put on our coats and went outside to stand in the still starry cold and listen. There was nothing but silence. The stock were bedded down; nobody, not even the night wind, was on the road. Mother had a way of saying "I don't understand it" that could cut fear into you like a knife. Near midnight she said, "You can go out one more time and then you must go to bed." The cold and the suspense were almost more than we could bear. We were about to turn back to the house when Mother said, "Sh-h-h-wait . . . I think I hear him."

We froze in place, our hearts pounding. Then, suddenly, we heard it, too. The unmistakable sound of iron-rimmed wheels squeaking over the snow. No other wagon made that exact sound—high, thin, still far away, musical—the sound of a sometimes stern but beloved man coming home. We hurried inside the house, swallowing our gladness.

Mother started warming up the leftovers. Father always expected to eat and eat well. The reason he was late and scared us so badly was simple enough. The mine was loading railroad cars and the haulers had to wait their turn. How easily and well we slept the rest of the night, and how often we have wished through the years that sleep could always come so quickly and unbidden.

We never saw an orange, except at Christmas time when Father bought a whole box and put them under his and Mother's bed so they wouldn't freeze. Mother put one in each of our stockings, which were hung on special nails around the kitchen stove, where it was always warm regardless of how early we got up. There were nuts in the stockings, along with raisins and chewing gum, pocket knives, hair ribbons, new pencils and art gum erasers. The things too big for our stretchy black cotton stockings –things such as the skates that happily came that year—were put around the tree with Mother's boxes of candy for us, for the Peytons, for the neighbors, for our teachers, and for a few special school friends, to whom we proudly delivered the boxes in good time. Mother was often asked to sell her candies but she was not a businesswoman. She enjoyed giving them away.

It was a very special Christmas that day when Father came up from the barn carrying a portable Edison phonograph. He had to go back and make a second trip for the big horn and the box of wonderful flat records of songs that had become popular during the war: "K-K-K-Katy," "Over There," "My Buddy," and many more, including his favorites by Sousa's band and, for Mother's delight, Strauss waltzes.

The phonograph wasn't new. Almost nothing you could trade a horse for was new, but it played well and loud. All during Christmas dinner we kids took turns jumping up from the table to wind it and put on new records. The Peytons had their Model T truck, but we had a marvelous machine, too. Besides, Father was certain that cars and trucks floundering over bad roads in mud and snowdrifts would only prove to be millstones around the necks of their spendthrift owners. We kids all went away from the table, grinning and groaning from our gluttony, to skate on the creek till the end of the best Christmas Day ever.

Los Ebanos Ferry

By DIANE CHAMNESS O'CONNOR

Photos Courtesy of Don O'Connor

How nice it would be if science would learn to communicate with trees. Then the old gnarled ebony tree that stands watch over the sleepy Rio Grande border town of Los Ebanos, as it has for over three hundred years, could tell tales of all it has seen and heard. The stories would be fascinating, because the tree guards the ancient ford that connects Los Ebanos with the quiet Mexican town of Diaz Ordaz, the same crossing used by the Spanish explorers under José de Escandón in the 1740s.

In 1738, Spanish officials, after being enthralled by letters from the Marquis of Altamira telling of the lush Rio Grande Valley, with its fertile land, valuable minerals, and salt beds, worried that the English might lay claim to the region. They decided to locate there a person capable of taming both the area and its people. According to Altamira, the natives were a barbaric nation of Indians, most of whom went without clothing and seemed more like wild, wandering beasts than human beings.

The search for the right man continued seven years, until it finally ended with the choice of José de Escandón. Escandón was born in 1700 in Soto la Marina, Spain. He arrived in Mexico at the tender age of fifteen, as a cavalry cadet and member of the mounted company of *Los Caballeros Encomenderos* ("The Lordly Knights"). He rose rapidly in rank, mainly through distinguishing himself by quelling violent Indian uprisings. He was a master peacemaker. His humane dealings with the natives led to such respect and trust on their part that several became trained members of the king's army.

Understandably impressed with Escandón's qualifications, the marquis of Altamira named him personal representative of the viceroy, as well as governor of the *Seno Mexicano*, the deserted strip of land that ran from Matagorda Bay in Texas south to Tampico. It was there that the extremely difficult job of colonizing the wild area began.

Escandón believed the uncharted territory of the *Seno Mexicano* could support a large colony, especially with irrigation. Soon, he organized a unique expedition to begin in January, 1747, consisting of seven groups of men, all under his direction. They were to travel different routes, meeting at the same time at the mouth of the Rio Grande, then known as the Río del Norte.

Escandón chose to use soldiers in order to reduce the cost of the expedition and to provide some semblance of safety against the threat of Indian attacks. The soldiers were enticed into joining the strange excursion by promises of salt-filled saddlebags and by an agreement that no man would be gone longer than thirty days or have to venture more than fifty leagues from his home settlement. On January 20, 1747, a total of 756 soldiers set out to cover 120,000 square miles, drawing maps, gathering information, and generally surveying the territory. At the end of the journey, the seven groups would meet and share their collected material.

Officially, Escandón's group left El Jaumave on January 24, 1747. The company consisted of 150 soldiers, a farrier, a surgeon, two missionaries, 50 servants, and 30 Indian allies. They carried food, tobacco, iron bars, tents, and trinkets to trade with the hostile Indians they expected to meet.

The ancient ebony tree has observed

The Los Ebanos International Ferry, as seen in 1986, heads for the U.S. side of the Rio Grande

every crossing on the Los Ebanos Ferry.

The Indians, however, reacted quite differently than expected. Most were so impressed by the strange collection of men and equipment, that they quickly retreated into the brush. A fair number, working up their courage, actually met and joined Escandón. One of them, a chief, on encountering Escandón, asked for a container of water. He then proceeded to wash the hands of Escandón, drying them with his own clothing. This friendship ritual was extended to the other members of Escandón's party, after which the chief joined the group as scout and translator.

February 10, 1747, Escandón's company arrived at the salt beds north of the Rio Grande. It was an exciting event because salt was such an important, rare commodity for both Spain and Mexico. By February 27, 1747, the group had crossed the Los Ebanos river crossing and was sending reports of marshes, land worth irrigating, and wild horses and cattle. Did the old ebony tree, a mere sapling at that time, hear their voices raised in wonder over the discovery of wild onions "sweeter than those cultivated"?

By December 1748, Escandón—the governor, captain general, and personal representative of the viceroy of this new province called *Nuevo Santander*—launched a giant publicity campaign to recruit settlers to migrate and form colonies. The offer included free land, 200 pesos to be used for supplies and equipment, a traveling allowance, the promise of irrigation, and, an understandably attractive perk even in today's lifestyles, no taxes for ten years.

The result was a landrush by over 700 families. The first colony was established March 5, 1749. It was christened Nuestra Senora de Santa Ana de Camargo, for Our Lady of Saint Ann, and was the beginning of the settling of the Rio Grande Valley.

Texas was annexed by the United States in 1845, a signal to Mexico that war was at hand. Although the ebony tree had seen nearly a hundred years of peace, watching settlers colonize the area, using the salt trail that led from

Los Ebanos to El Sol Del Rey approximately forty miles northeast, it would now witness war.

The conflict began when the Texas legislature passed a resolution calling on the United States to "occupy without delay the frontier of this Republic with such troops as may be necessary for its defense." The Mexican troops stationed between the Nueces and the Rio Grande rivers had been a worry for some time. United States President James Polk saw the chance to permanently eliminate what he considered to be the Mexican threat.

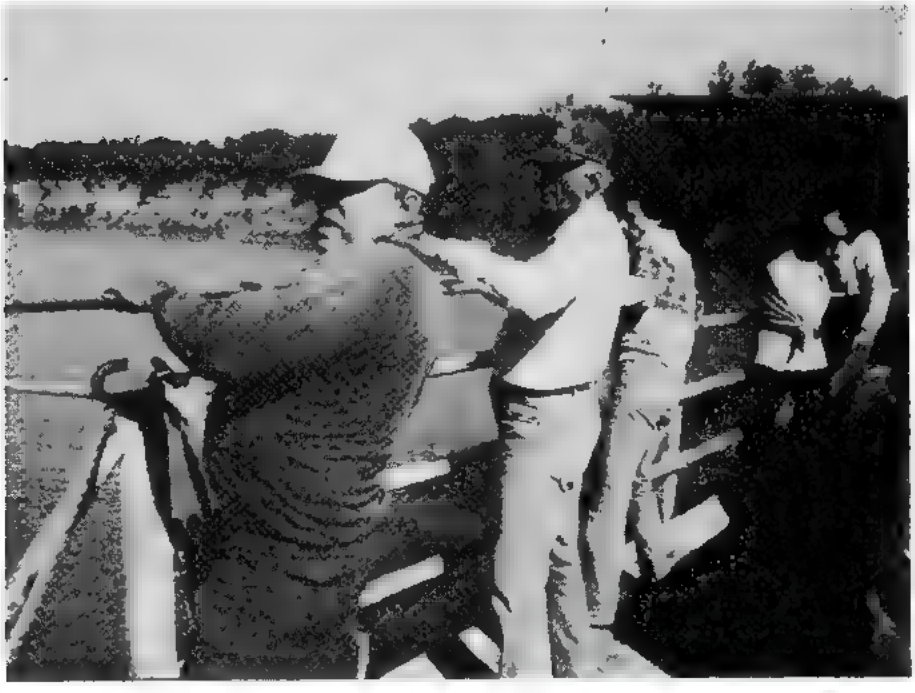
Polk moved first, ordering troops dispatched to the new state of Texas to confront an enemy about which he had very little understanding. The response was expected; Mexico chose to stand and fight.

Until the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo at the conclusion of the Mexican War, the ebony tree, now stately with age, its massive branches providing shade over the dusty road, would watch the movement of Mexican War troops across the Rio Grande. Men and horses made their way to meet the invaders, Zachary Taylor and his "Army of Occupation." Captain Ben McCulloch also was involved in conquering the area. He and his mustered company of Texas Rangers were accompanied by the world's first war correspondent, George Kendall. A New Orleans reporter, kendall traveled with McCulloch's group and detailed his adventures for a news-hungry readership. He was especially talented in capturing the mood of the times, often reporting on the activities of the newly-formed Texas Rangers.

Kendall tells of riding with the Rangers as they tracked General Antonio Canales, an enemy of Texas and the man in command of the forces along the Rio Grande. A heavy, drenching rain caught the Ranger Company unaware, and one of Kendall's best anecdotes originates from that event. It seems Samuel Reid was sleeping next to an old Ranger, much more experienced in the field than he. A stream of rainwater began to run along the ground next to them, and finally under their bedrolls. Reid wanted to move and suggested to the old Ranger that they do so. The elder lawman beside him replied in true Ranger fashion, "Don't you see that we've got this puddle of water warm now, and if we move, we shall only get into another and take cold?"

According to Kendall, the Rangers traveled 250 miles in ten days, without losing a single man. He also noted that during those ten days, the Rangers never removed their coats, boots, or spurs.

As the U.S. Army and Rangers left the region after the war, cattle thievery became rampant. Juan Cortina was influential south of the border, and he supported the bandits, claiming they were only recovering stolen property that had once belonged to their ancestors.



Hand-pulling a steel ferry across the Rio Grande is no easy task

Cuba arranged contracts with Mexico for the delivery of large quantities of beef and, needless to say, American cattle became a source of quick revenue. It is estimated that 100,000 head of cattle were taken south across the Rio Grande by outlaws from both sides of the river. Over 1400 head were stolen from John McAllen's ranch alone in 1871.

Cattle ranchers joined together and formed their own militia, more often than not taking what minimal law there was into their own hands. Their efforts did little good, and the rustling and violence escalated. Captain King of the famous King Ranch and several companions were attacked July 31, 1872. The King group was traveling in a coach when an unidentified party opened fire. One of the occupants of the coach was killed, and several were injured. E.J. Davis, the governor of Texas, immediately offered a $600.00 reward for the capture of the criminals.

In November of 1874, another attack took place just north of Brownsville. Billy McMahan, a teacher, was murdered in a particularly gruesome manner by a group of bandits led by José María Olguine. Olguine was known as *Aguja*, "the Needle," because of his ability to slip into houses and kill the occupants without detection. Billy McMahan was tortured, his fingers, toes, and ears chopped off. Finally, after hacking off his legs, the bandits left him lying dead in the brush.

In the area of Los Ebanos, the cattle rustling continued unobstructed. The ranchers, desperate now, finally agreed to call out the Texas Rangers. A telegram was delivered to General William Steele from Sheriff John McClure of Nueces County on April 18, 1875: "Is Capt. McNelly coming. We are in trouble. Five ranches burned by disguised men near La Parra last week. Answer."

McNelly arrived in Edinburgh late in April, disbanded the ranch militias and other groups not under the direct authority of the State of Texas. He then discovered that the force behind the cattle rustling was Juan Cortina. As the herds were moved across the Los Ebanos crossing, McNelly waited and watched.

Finally, late in May McNelly heard of a steamer waiting three miles offshore for four hundred cattle to be delivered. Two-thirds of the cattle had American brands, and it was reported that over half of Cortina's men sat horses stolen from American herds.

McNelly chose Jesús Sandoval, called

THE BOOK MART

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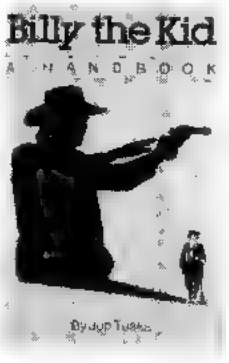

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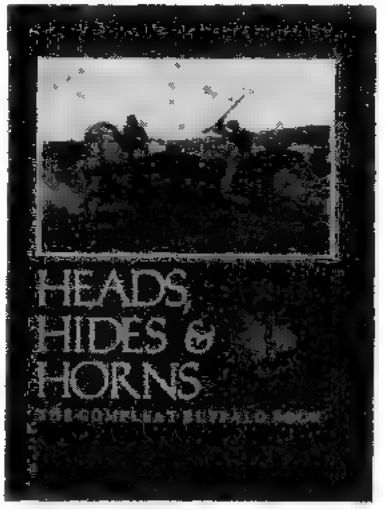

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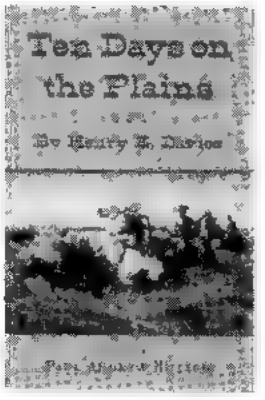

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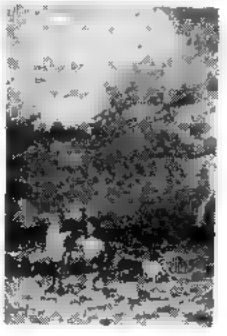

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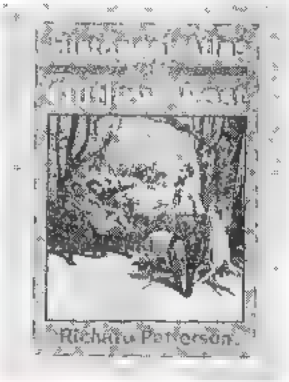

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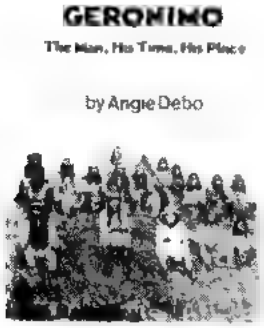

TW43—GERONIMO: THE MAN, HIS TIME, HIS PLACE. By Angie Debo. In this first-rate biography, Debo draws upon Geronimo's own account of his life, first-hand narratives of his warriors and other contemporaries, and traditional historical sources. She portrays him not as "the tiger of the human race," as contemporary accounts described him, but as an individual with his own characteristics. University of Oklahoma Press.

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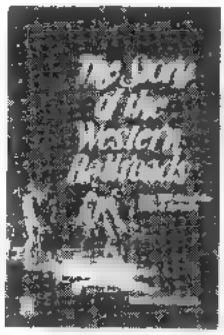

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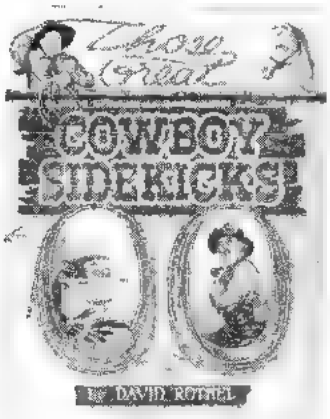

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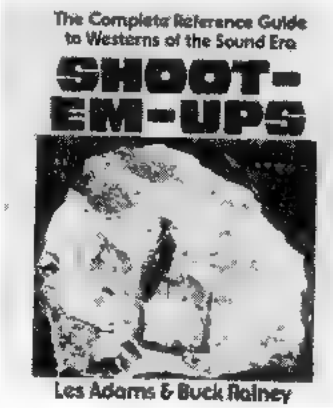

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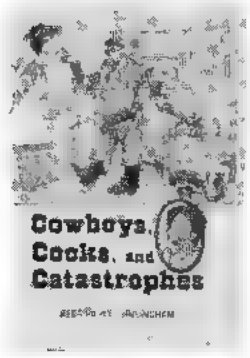

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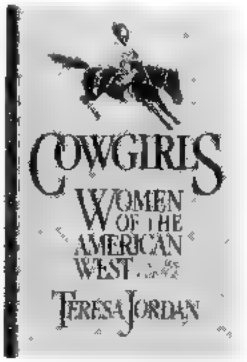

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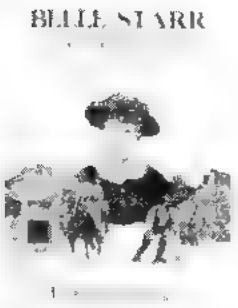

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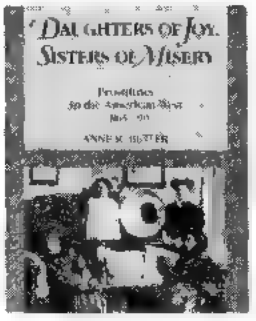

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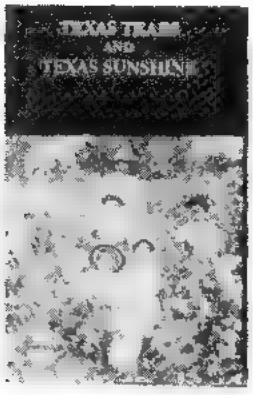

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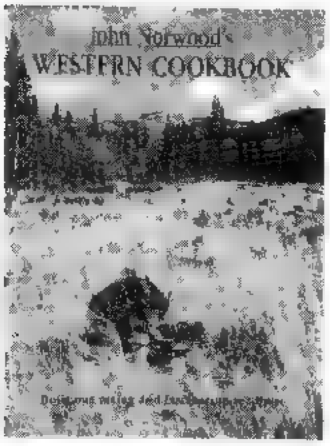

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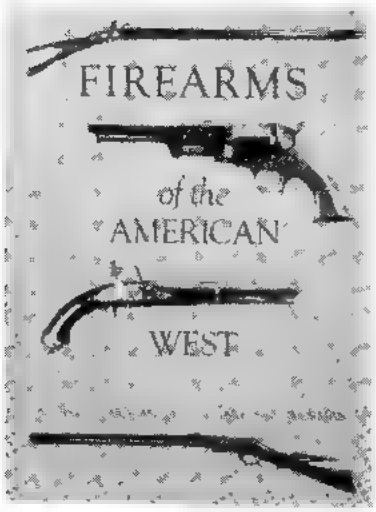

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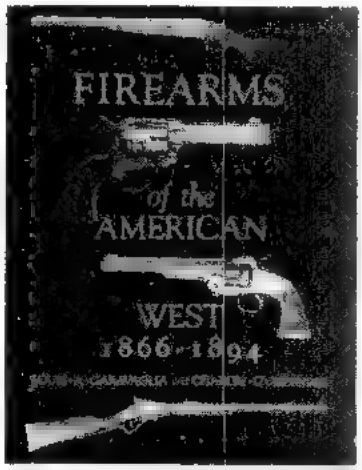

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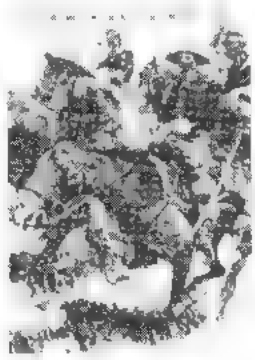

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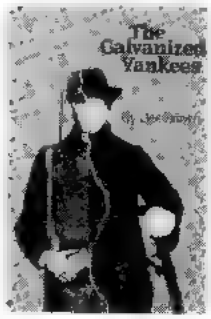

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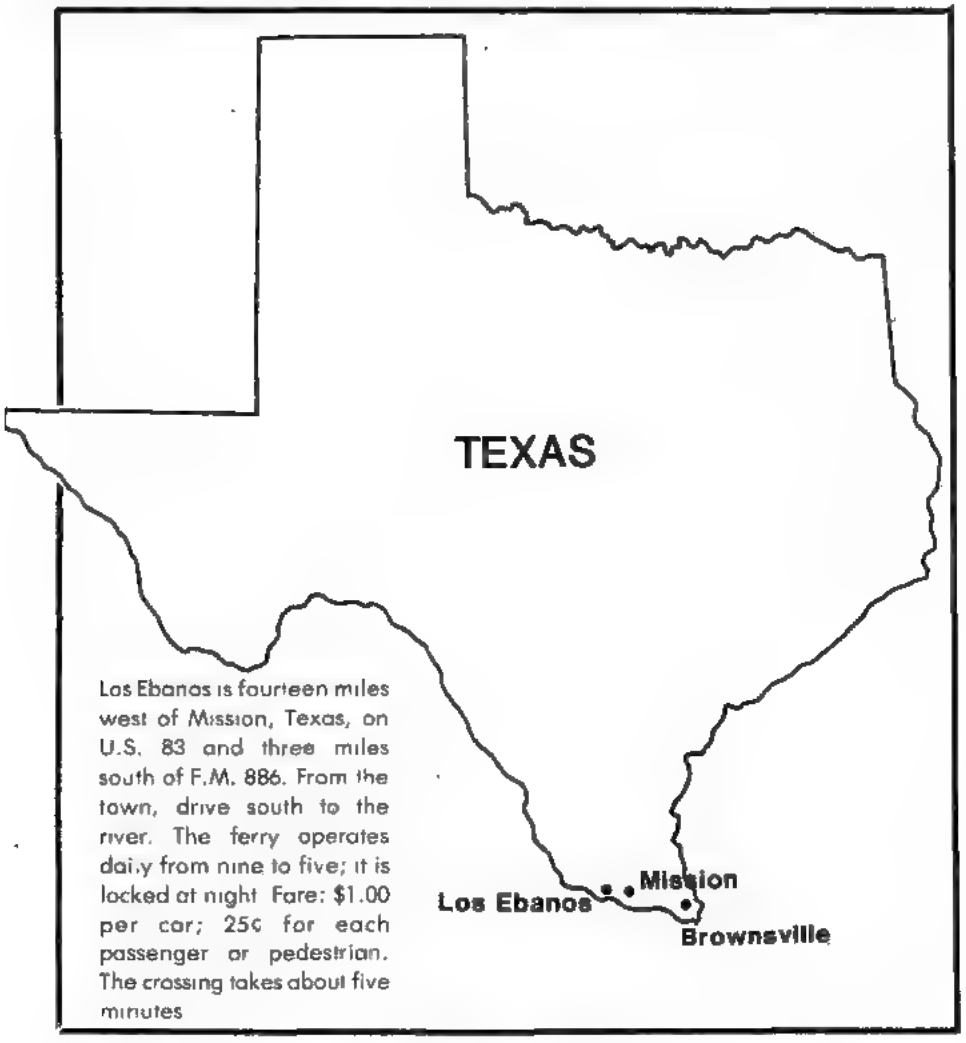
"Casoose" or "Old Casoose," to assist him. Sandoval, the owner of a ranch on the north side of the river, was feared by most outlaws familiar with him. The story of Sandoval is partly legend, partly truth, and is probably best told in N.A. Jennings' book, *A Texas Ranger.*

According to Jennings, Sandoval and another man captured four Mexican bandits and hanged them from a tree as a warning to anyone else taking up robbery as a profession. Shortly thereafter, Sandoval's ranch was attacked by a band of Mexicans while he was away. His wife and daughter were assaulted and, according to some reports, killed. During the attack, Sandoval's cattle were stolen, and his barn and home burned.

After Sandoval returned and discovered the catastrophe, a series of strange events occurred. Bandits were murdered in their sleep, their ranches burned. Water wells were poisoned and Mexican cattle died. From time to time, Sandoval would reappear, buy large amounts of ammunition and supplies, then disappear again into the brush.

George Durham, who rode with both McNelly and Sandoval, described Sandoval as a man who "wore a straggly red beard flecked with white, and red hair dropping almost to his shoulders. His skin was dry and parched, and his light blue eyes seemed to throw off sparks. He was what you would call spooky . . ."

Sandoval and McNelly made quite a team. They rounded up suspected cattle rustlers and interrogated them rather cheerfully. Giving as reasons the lack of food and the fear that an escapee would warn the other rustlers, McNelly allowed Sandoval free rein in his questioning technique.



Los Ebanos is fourteen miles west of Mission, Texas, on U.S. 83 and three miles south of F.M. 886. From the town, drive south to the river. The ferry operates daily from nine to five; it is locked at night. Fare: $1.00 per car; 25¢ for each passenger or pedestrian. The crossing takes about five minutes.

SANDOVAL would slip a noose around the individual's neck and toss the rope over a tree branch. He would then hoist the prisoner off the ground, strangling him until he answered the questions. Durham also recorded an instance when, "Each bandit had been pulled loose from his head. Bound tight, each had been lashed to a tree by the neck; then Casoose had looped the feet with his rawhide lariat and slapped his horse. . . . Old Casoose had put his hat on the ground and was looking up, crossing himself. White foam was dripping off his chin, and his eyes were blazing fire . . ."

After much questioning, McNelly found the rustlers fourteen miles up from Brownsville on June 12, 1875. Cortina's men tried to outrun the Texans through the salt marshes. The bandits included Camilo Lerma and José María Olguine, *Agujo.* McNelly traveled with twenty-two Rangers including Berry Smith, a sixteen-year-old boy whose father was a Ranger.

The battle in the salt marsh raged, with the bandits fighting for their lives. Berry Smith was killed as he approached a patch of thicket where a rustler was hidden; however, he managed to wound his killer. The wounded Mexican then crawled off into a nearby pond. When McNelly arrived and learned of Smith's death, he ordered his men to surround the pond and begin firing into the rush grass. In minutes, Smith's death had been avenged. The final tally was seventeen bandits killed, including an American named Jack Ellis. One Mexican had escaped. The only Ranger casualty was young Berry Smith.

The inspector of cattle, John J. Smith, took possession of all the stolen cattle. Two hundred sixteen head were accounted for, including ninety-seven head divided among thirty-four different owners. The rest were sold for charity. The gear taken from the bandits included twenty-two pistols, twelve rifles, and fourteen saddles.

The day Berry Smith was buried in Brownsville, the U.S. troops sent a mule wagon to bring in the remains of the bandits. Although only a few bodies were actually found, U.S. Marshal Joseph P. O'Schaughnessy and McNelly had them stacked in a pile on the public square as a direct message to Cortina and his followers. Durham stood watch that night and reported, "A good half-moon lighted up the plaza til well after midnight, I'd judge. All we had to do was watch that stack of dead bandits. Nobody came to try and get one, and none of the dead bandits tried to leave. It was an easy patrol."

Not surprisingly, the "message" proved highly effective, and raids dropped off dramatically in the next few months. Cattle rustling slowed even more drastically after the Las Cuevas War and eventually came to a near halt.

The ancient ebony tree also watched as a series of disasters struck the region. A deadly cholera epidemic took place in 1866, and the winter of 1866–67 was one of the worst on record, recording the first snowfall since 1835. In 1867, the

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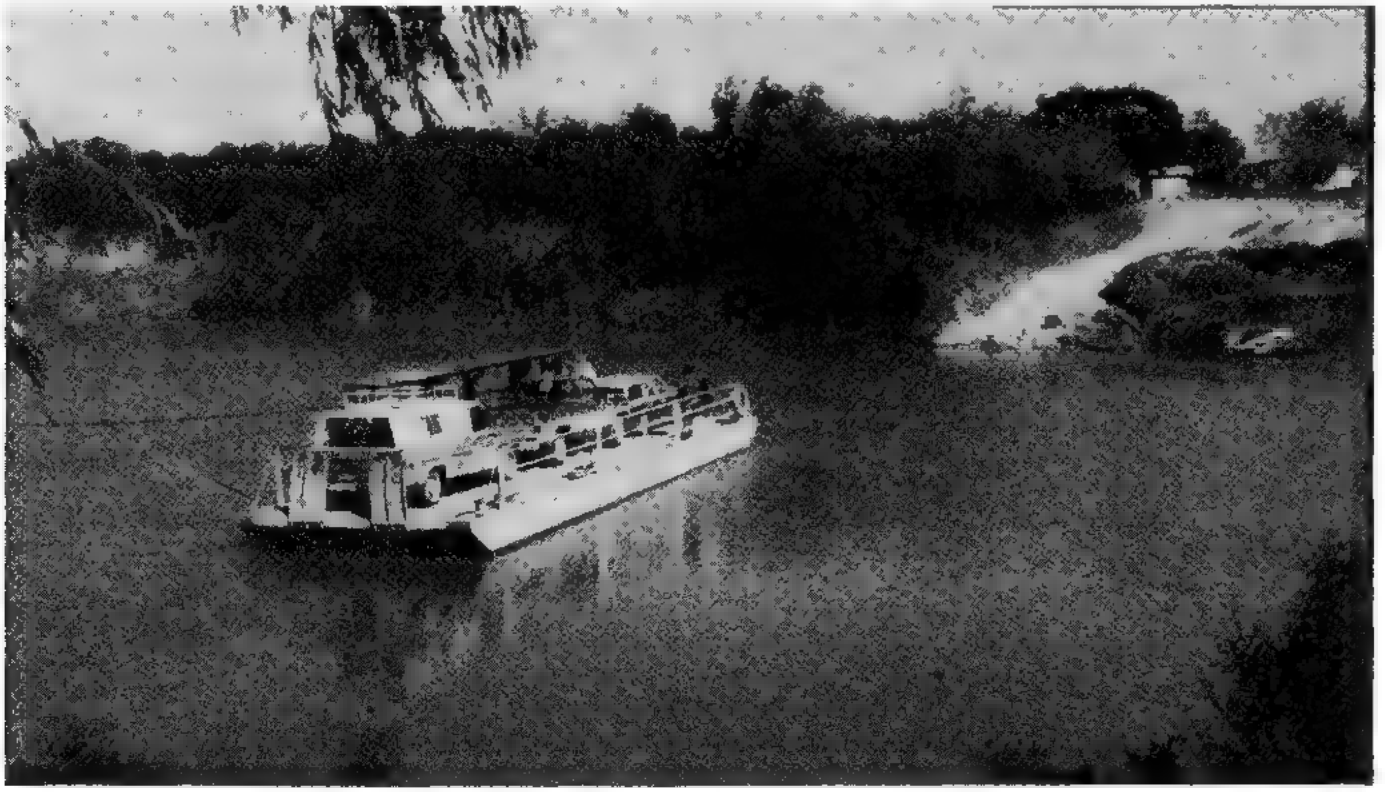
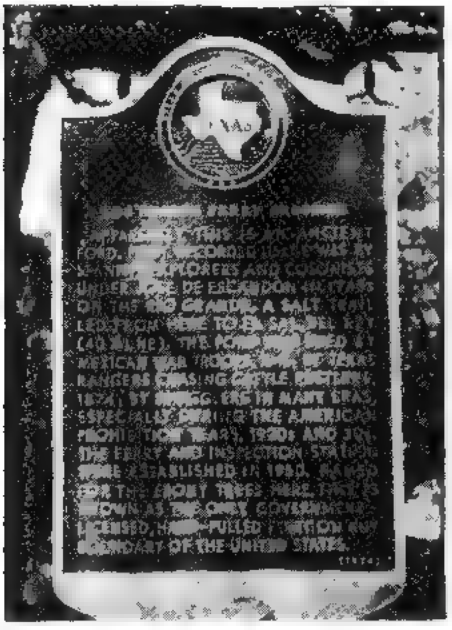


Another view of the Los Ebanos Ferry crossing the Rio Grande.

horrible winter was followed by an even more terrible summer with an outbreak of yellow fever during which one out of every three residents of the area died. Finally, a hurricane surged across South Texas on October 8, destroying Clarksville and Bagdad.

Along the Rio Grande border, beneath the sheltering arms of the ebony tree,



Pictured is the Texas State Historical Commission plaque at Ebony Tree overlooking Los Ebanos.

the river flowed along, the crossing at Los Ebanos used intermittently by smugglers and especially during the 1920s and 1930s by anti-Prohibitionists carrying illegal whiskey.

The headquarters for smuggling during the Prohibition era was at La Grulla, just around the hairpin bend upriver from the Los Ebanos crossing. La Grulla had the reputation of being one of the toughest towns in the country, and the area was known as "Smuggler's Paradise."

By 1950 the United States decided to crack down on smuggling at the Los Ebanos ford, and a border patrol station was established. The Los Ebanos International Ferry was created at the same time. The area around the river looks much as it must have three hundred years ago, the road dusty and a little more worn, the river more shallow but still sparkling in the hot sunshine. But the ebony tree, now a giant towering over the water, has had something new added, a thick metal cable around its trunk.

THE CABLE is attached to the only government-licensed, hand-pulled ferry on any international boundary in the world. The small steel craft plows gamely across the river many times each day, powered by four or five strong men pulling hand-over-hand on a thick rope that propels the ferry to the opposite shore. A stout cable on pulleys keeps the boat from being swept downstream.

As many as three vehicles, their passengers, and a few pedestrians can be carried safely from Los Ebanos to Dias Ordaz and back in one trip. Docking is simply the act of tossing a rope around a piling and holding fast until the cargo is unloaded. Traveling through the estimated fifteen feet of water for a distance of approximately 450 feet takes little more than five minutes; it's certainly time well spent.

Whether drifting along on the Rio Grande from shore to shore or standing beneath the ebony tree that observed it all, it's easy to become immersed in the history of the region. In fact, on a quiet day, the only noise is that of Mexican cattle grazing among the brush, birdcalls, and the insistent buzzing of flies over the water. The dust and rocks on the primitive road are the same material trod by Escandón and his men, and the sunshine is as bright and hot as any day three hundred years ago.

Sometimes, it almost seems as though hoofbeats can be heard, or possibly voices from long ago. But then, logically, it could only be the sound of the wind rustling in the dust-green leaves of the old ebony tree, the one that watches still.

THE BIG COUNTRY

By BILL O'NEAL

Charlton Heston and Gregory Peck as the ranch foreman and eastern sea captain who love the same girl.

The Big Country (1958) is a fine example of big-budget Westerns at their grandiose best. Playing sea captain Jim McKay, Gregory Peck starred in the film and co-produced it with director William Wyler.

McKay has come West to marry lovely Pat Terrill (Carroll Baker), daughter of cattle baron Major Henry Terrill (Charles Bickford in a crusty, commanding portrayal). Complicating the picture, foreman Steve Leech (Charlton Heston), who idolizes the major, is in love with Pat and holds Easterner McKay in contempt.

A more serious complication is posed by Rufus Hennessey (Burl Ives), who detests Major Terrill for his domination of the range, especially the Big Muddy, which provides the only reliable water in the Big Country. Rufus' son, Buck (Chuck Connors), is a repulsive liar and coward.

The local schoolmarm, Julie Morgan (Jean Simmons), holds the key to the range dispute. The Big Muddy runs through land she inherited from her grandfather. She is best friends with Pat Terrill, but when Pat and Jim McKay have a lovers' quarrel, the sea captain and schoolmarm are attracted to each other, although nasty Buck Hennessey thinks the teacher is "sparkin'" him. McKay persuades Julie to sell him her ranch, which she does not operate, so that he can make the Big Muddy available to anyone who needs the water. But, of course, Major Terrill and Rufus Hennessey scorn such a peaceful solution to their feud.

The superb cast richly explores these complex relationships. Peck is unassuming but confident in his strange new environment. When repeatedly asked if he has ever seen anything so big as the open prairies he replies yes, "a couple of oceans," and he confounds the Westerners by navigating the vast plains with a compass. He futher exasperates his hosts by refusing to fight the Hennesseys or Steve Leech or to ride a notorious bronco, Old Thunder. Of course, he tames Old Thunder when no one is looking and, when finally pushed far enough, he fights with guns and fists.

Bickford is stern and authoritarian, and Carroll Baker portrays a daughter who adores her father more than any other man. Charlton Heston is sullen but the essence of the silent, capable Westerner.

The most effective performances, however, are turned in by singer Burl Ives as the ponderous but strangely dignified Rufus Hennessey, and by Chuck Connors. The lanky, shifty-eyed Connors, an ex-baseball player, delivers his most memorable movie role as the bullying, lying craven, Buck Hennessey. Ives and Connors explore a fascinating love-hate relationship: "You wantin' to see me, Pa?" asks Buck. "Before you was born I thought I was."

The Big Country runs nearly three hours, but offers an exciting, sweeping score and a series of striking scenes: a stagecoach tearing across a magnificent Southwestern vista at the opening of the movie; the drunken Hennessey bunch putting on a thrilling display of horsemanship before Pat and the Eastern newcomer; the brutal revenge extracted by the Major against the Hennesseys; the exhausting midnight fist fight on the prairie between McKay and Leech; the formal duel between McKay and Buck Hennessey; the Major's men loyally rallying to ride with him into an ambush in Blanco Canyon. *The Big Country* offers much to be savored with every viewing.

Arthur Hill on stage about 1905

By JOHN MORING

Arthur Hill

His bluntness and

Alone on an unnamed Alaskan creek, Arthur Hill faced a crisis. Dropped offshore in a small dinghy, he had waved farewell to an overloaded steamer bound for the gold fields. For the next month, he had panned for gold, moving to different locations as the color ran out.

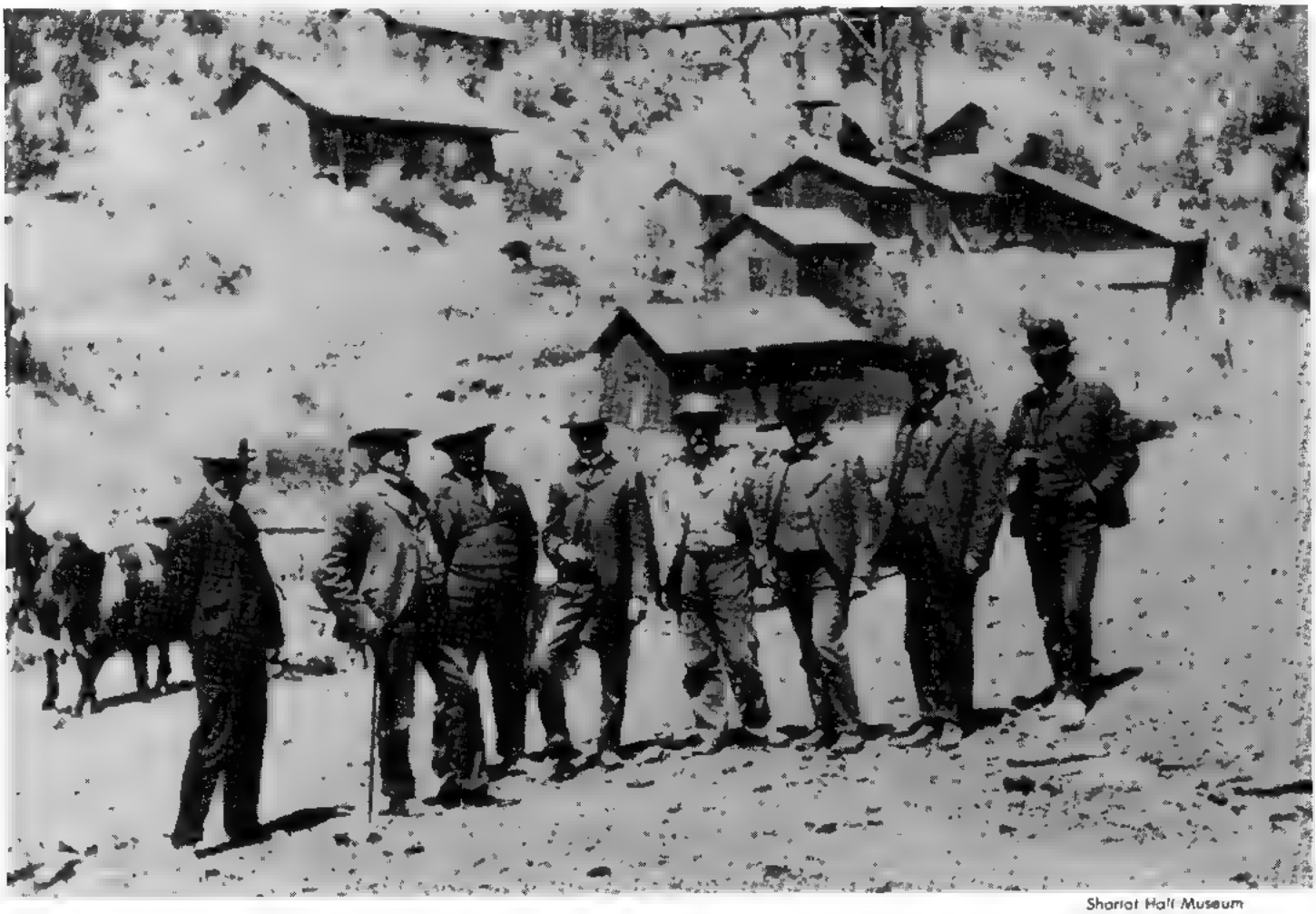
The steamer would return after one month. But two days before the steamer's arrival, Arthur slipped a disc in his back. The slightest movement caused intense pain. He was immobile. For two days Arthur remained flat on his back. His supplies of food were nearly gone, but he was barely able to eat anyway. he could only stare at the sky and contemplate his fate.

If he could not somehow row out to the channel that day, the steamer would not wait. It would not return for another month, and Arthur needed medical care and food. He doubted he could last that long. There was only one choice: he had to be in that channel when the steamer returned.

Somehow—he later was never able to understand just how—he forced himself to crawl into the rowboat, to lift himself into a sitting position, and to pull the oars against his aching back muscles and nerves. It was 1898, and Arthur Hill was in his "notional" period. He was only twenty-four.

Old-timers in the West had a term for people like Arthur Hill. They would call him "notional"; he did things as the notion struck him. Before his notional period was over, Arthur Hill would be an actor and playwright throughout the West, a gold and copper miner in Arizona, and a Depression-era police chief of San Diego. He would pan for gold in Alaska, meet Wyatt Earp and gunfighters from the Lincoln County War, and lead the manhunt for the machine gun killers of two guards on the Agua Caliente money car.

Arthur Hill's roots were in California. The oldest of his uncles, William G. Hill, had complete control over the Tejon Ranch in Kern County in the 1870s: 200,000 acres, 75,000 head of animals, and 200 Mexican and Indian ranch hands.



Sharlot Hall Museum

Pictured are mine officials and local dignitaries at the Crown King District, about 1905. Arthur Hill walked through this mining area while heading to Prescott. Frank Murphy, one of the owners of Castle Hot Springs, is second from the left

~Miner, Actor, Law Officer

lack of diplomacy promoted a diversity of jobs and experiences.

When William Hill died of "dropsy of the heart" at the age of thirty-seven, Arthur Reavis Hill was two years old, born on May 31, 1874. Although most of the Hill family remained in the Napa region, Ben P. Hill, Arthur's father, settled in the El Cajon Valley, near San Diego, about 1870. He became a farmer and married Lulu Hollister, a member of a pioneer California family, in 1871. He ran for sheriff of San Diego on several occasions, though he was far from successful. A biographical sketch of candidates in 1877 listed his major attributes as his "good character" and his apparent willingness to loan farm implements to others. His qualifications included a statement that "every weary traveller passing his house has been entertained with the most wholesome hospitality."

Unfortunately, hospitality was not enough. Ben Hill was the perennial losing candidate on the Democratic ticket through Arthur Hill's childhood. Finally in 1892, the elder Hill succeeded and served one term as county sheriff from 1893 to 1894.

Arthur toyed with a law career, memorized Blackstone, but eventually lost interest. His notional urgings took control. After a trip to Chicago to visit the 1893 World's Fair (Columbian Exposition) and its impressive Ferris wheel, Arthur returned to California and was drawn to acting. His mother felt an actor should have proper training. San Francisco was the nearest center of such culture in the mid-1890s, and Julia Melville was California's most renowned teacher of theater. Several Broadway-bound actors and actresses received their early training with her, including Katherine Corcoran, a successful New York actress of the day, and later the wife of noted actor/playwright James Herne.

It was an exciting time in the West, and the population was thirsty for the refinements of opera and the stage. There was a void to be filled by any

Arthur Hill on stage about 1905.

number of small stock companies. Arthur figured to a be a part of it all. He talked his way into a job with a team of married actors named Carl Smith and Beatrice Lieb; the group toured widely in California and other western states. The stars stayed in the $1.50 hotels, while Arthur was delegated to the $1.00 establishments. His pay wasn't much, but it was adequate: $8 a week and cakes.

But Carl Smith's dreams of stardom went awry; there were not enough gate receipts and too many $1.50 hotel bills. He lost money and finally had a blow-up with Arthur Hill. They parted ways. It would not be the first time Arthur had a falling out with an employer. Throughout his life, he stated his opinions bluntly and sometimes not too diplomatically. Many notional people have that trait—it promotes a diversity of jobs and experiences.

Arthur was not unemployed long. He joined a succession of California stock companies. After another blow-up with a stock company, Arthur took off for Alaska in the gold boom of '98 and found himself in pain, sitting inside a bobbing rowboat in an Alaskan Bay.

HIS ALASKAN mining was not very profitable, but it did net him a few dollars. He traveled to other parts of the Territory, and, like hundreds before and after, shook the hand of Wyatt Earp. That was seventeen years after the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, but Wyatt Earp's legend followed him. Earp had moved to Nome with his bride to run the Dexter Saloon and Gambling Hall and to promote local prize fights. The difference between Arthur Hill and the others who shook Earp's hand is that the paths of the two men would cross again.

With what money remained from his gold rush days, Hill made his way to Phoenix, eventually landing work on the Phoenix-Prescott train as a peanut butcher—selling candies and nuts to passengers. The job didn't last long. Arthur couldn't keep all the time schedules straight; he missed a train and was fired.

Hearing of a job, he walked fifty miles north of Phoenix to Castle Hot Springs, Arizona's oldest continually-operated resort. Frank Murphy, brother of the territorial governor and well known in the fields of mining and railroads, was an owner of the resort, and Arthur ended up working for weeks at various odd jobs.

Arthur had pleasant contacts with Murphy and other important visitors,

Pictured is a winch at one of the mines at McCabe about 1910. A similar hoist was in use at the mines for at least two decades.

but he had an argument with a woman who said he didn't clean the bath tubs sufficiently. He told the woman exactly what to do with the cleaning supplies and abruptly left. Walking some seventy miles over cactus-studded ground, he reached Mayer, southeast of Prescott, several days later.

Mayer was perhaps most important as a rail station between Phoenix and Prescott. Later it became a center of some note for sheep, cattle, and ore. Mayer is still a small town, but in 1899 it was even smaller. Arthur Hill met the town's founder, Joe Mayer, and had a meal in the combination postal station/store/saloon.

As Arthur finished his meal, the train from Prescott arrived. Off stepped an advance man for a mining promoter named Clifford. Any survey of the history of Arizona mines turns up the name of Henry B. Clifford. The well-dressed, square-jawed Clifford was not so much in the mining business as he was in the business of buying and selling mines. He bought up old mines—primarily gold and copper—sometimes

Sharlot Hall Museum

staked out new ones, and then promoted them. He made his money not by extracting ore, but by selling stock to Easterners. Arthur was put in charge of a small crew to timber up old mines. Once they actually struck a rich vein, and the mine looked even better than they had anticipated. The discovery was quickly promoted by Clifford into $20,000 in stock sales.

There were dozens of mines in the area surrounding Prescott, and Arthur worked his share of them. Many—Easy Boss, Old Pine—have been forgotten, but a few such as those at McCabe and Big Bug made their mark on mining history.

There were actually several mines at McCabe, about five miles West of Humbolt, including the McCabe, Gladstone, Rebel, Golden Dawn, and others. Arthur worked the crooked, 200-foot shaft at the Rebel Mine. He also worked at the McCabe Mine itself, which was unusual at the time because of its steam driven hoist (originally a horse-drawn hoist). Four to five men were lowered in an iron bucket down the 900-foot shaft to horizontal shafts at each 100-foot level. Ore was retrieved from the mine in the bucket, as were the men at the end of the shifts.

The Big Bug mining camp was settled during the Civil War and gained its name from the huge bugs encountered by the first prospectors. Eventually, it became a typical boom town, with three or four saloons, two grocery stores, and a few other sundry businesses, including two barbershops. Big Bug, like so many mining camps and regions in Arizona, was a melting pot of cultures: Germans, Portuguese, Mexicans, and, of course, the Cornish, known as "Cousin Jacks" and "Cousin Jennys." The Cornish were primarily miners and merchants. Many

This is not a western street scene, but a stock company preparing for a western stage production about 1902. Hill is second from the right.

were related, and some staked others to the fare from England, only to hold the new arrivals in a form of indentured servitude until the debt was repaid.

Others in the mining camps were more dangerous. It was, after all, still a wild land. Even with such trappings of civilization as railroads and New Year's Eve dances at the schoolhouse, many men still strapped pistols to their waists. McCabe was a rough camp. Prescott was largely destroyed in a huge fire in 1900, apparently caused by a careless miner at the edge of Prescott's Whiskey Row. One such dangerous man encountered by Arthur Hill called himself John Kinney. "I met up with a character that I didn't know anything about at the time," he said later, though he worked closely alongside Kinney. "He never was a big fighter, but he was along in the Billy the Kid fight, the Lincoln County War in New Mexico and Texas, and it was quite a mess."

Records of the Lincoln County War turn up bits of information on John Kinney. He was part of the heavy guard bringing the shackled Billy the Kid to town and later was involved with more than his share of bloodshed during "the War." Whether the two Kinneys were in fact the same is perhaps not as important as one certainty: John Kinney of the Big Bug was always armed and was a dead shot. Once, he came out of a Big Bug saloon with Arthur, liquored-up, and drew two pistols. Just like a scene from an old Tom Mix western, he rolled a can down the street, hitting the top of the can with bullets from first one pistol, then the other.

After four years as a miner, Arthur Hill left Arizona in 1902 and, at age twenty-eight, entered a new acting period. He joined a repertory company in Merced and traveled throughout California, becoming an accomplished stage actor in eight different shows. He had to learn new parts daily. That job led to stints with other stock companies performing to packed houses in San Diego, Dallas, Salt Lake City, Duluth, and points in between.

In Chicago, he joined the Berkhardt Troupe and played all the Orpheum theaters from Chicago westward. It was a better arrangement professionally and

Arthur Hill in a scene from *The Strenuous Daisy*, performed by the Barbee Hill Company in 1910

financially. In vaudeville, performers paid their own fare on trains. But stock companies paid the fares of actors. It was not Pullman class, but it was enough to make a difference.

Hill's acting career and personal life reached a milestone on May 20, 1908, in Santa Ana, California. He married Rilla B. McAdams, known in vaudeville as O'Rilla Barbee. Together, they formed Barbee Hill and Company and toured from California to Chicago, working vaudeville stages and casinos. The twosome wrote several plays, but today only the script of the forgettable one-act comedy, "A Strenuous Daisy," remains. It was a happy period, but it ended abruptly with Rilla's death. The Barbee Hill Company disbanded.

IN 1914, while walking down a street in San Diego, Arthur was stopped by an acquaintance, Glenn Treleaven, who encouraged him to become a policeman. Ever notional, Arthur replied that he was "between engagements." He promptly walked into the police building and signed up

What started as a typical Arthur Hill whim began a very atypical, stable period in his life. Beginning as a clerk-patrolman in 1914, he was promoted to sergeant in 1917, lieutenant in 1920, and captain in 1923. It was another transitional period in history. San Diego was changing from mud and dust to paved roads conveying people in automobiles. It was a transitional period for people as well—Wyatt Earp moved back to San Diego and again met Arthur Hill. This time, however, Hill was a police officer and Earp was a boxing promoter, real estate investor, and race horse owner.

During that period, in 1919, Hill married Ida Griffin, widow of a former county supervisor and daughter of one of the original pioneers on Brigham Young's Mormon Trail. Ida Griffin became the first police matron in San Diego.

In the early 1920s, San Diego had the highest per capita number of traffic accidents of any city in the country. Captain Hill was assigned the problem, though he had only six motorcycle officers to maintain all traffic responsibilities. Yet he devised a traffic plan that was later copied by dozens of cities across the country.

Police chiefs during the period were appointed by and served at the pleasure of the mayor. When new mayor Henry Clark took office in 1929, he named fifty-five-year-old Arthur Hill as chief. In 1929, the San Diego Police Department patrolled an area of 93.5 square miles with 196 people, including, among others, 25 motorcycle officers, 85 patrolmen, 13 auto patrolmen, 5 matrons, 1 janitor, 6 lifeguards, and 4 street painters.

San Diego Police Dept and Pliny Castanien

Arthur Hill, after being named Captain, San Diego Police Department, in 1923

Within a week of taking office, Chief Hill was drawn into the largest manhunt in San Diego history. Two men in a new Ford coupe pulled up to the Agua Caliente casino car on Highway 101, near National City. They opened fire with machine guns on the big Cadillac containing the money satchel. It was the first machine gun robbery in county history. Two Mexican guards were killed, and depending on the account, perhaps over $85,000 was taken. The massive manhunt was successful, and the robbers, a rum runner and a bootlegger, were quickly captured.

A new mayor took office in 1931 and Arthur Hill returned to the rank of assistant chief, with a permanent rank of captain. He remained in that position despite a revolving-door procession of chiefs following his tenure.

Arthur Hill retired in 1935, after twenty-one years on the force. He spent his retirement years quietly, his notional period behind him. He followed the news of the police department with interest and noted the passing changes in the mining country of Yavapai County, Arizona. He spoke his opinion outright, as he had always done, but he let others follow the notional trail. He died, peacefully, in El Cajon, California, in 1960.

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Christmas Tragedy at Si

Nothing could be done. "When the last that were rescued escaped," reported the citizens' committee, "there was not a sound or a moan to be heard above the roar and crackling of the flames.

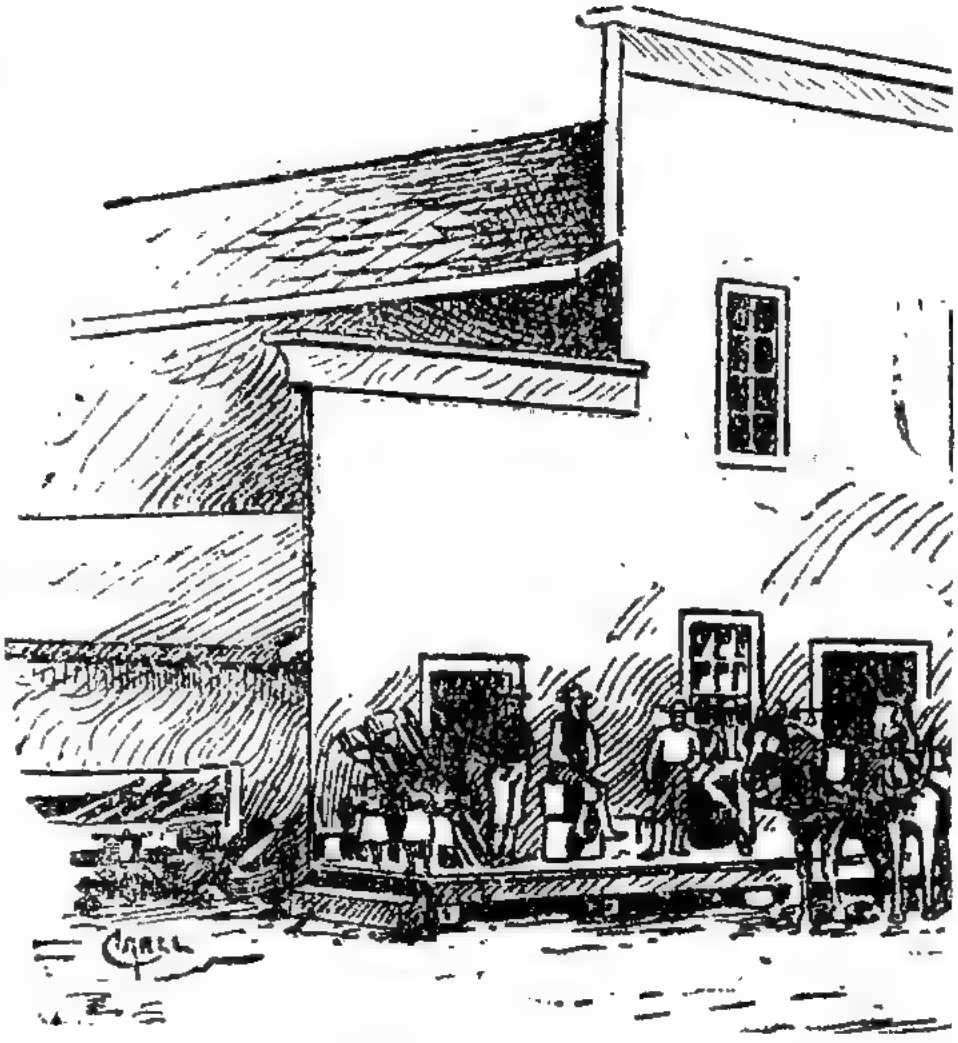
By early winter enough snow had fallen at Silver Lake to assure a white Christmas. Once snow fell on the high desert of central Oregon it stayed for the season.

Silver Lake, then as now, was one of the most remote towns in the American West. It lay in a valley near a shallow, often dry lake from which it got its name, closely flanked on the east and west by pine-forested mountains. Its nearest neighbors—Lakeview, the county seat; and Klamath Falls—lay one hundred miles to the south. Bend, a larger town now eighty miles north, did not exist in 1894.

After a few false starts, Silver Lake had made its presence known in 1886 with the construction of a hotel with a livery stable and a general store with a post office. Reached by an outside staircase in the rear, the upper floor of the Chrisman Brothers store served as the meeting place for all community functions.

Now anticipation of Christmas was running high at ranches and homesteads as far as thirty and forty miles distant. For adults, it was one of two or three times in a year that everybody would be in town; for children there would be the Christmas party with a tree, candy, and presents. Christmas of 1894 would be something to remember.

For the party, a stage, curtains, and the community Christmas tree had been set up at the front end of the hall over the Chrisman Brothers store. The audience, later estimated at 160 to 200 people, was seated on wooden benches. School children dutifully performed songs, poems, readings, and skits drilled into them by their teacher. Some adults had roles to play, others shared their talents with organ, fiddle, or mouth organ. The gathering was typical of the western American frontier at the turn of the century.



After the fatal fire, a sketch of the Chrisman & Co. store in Silver Lake appeared

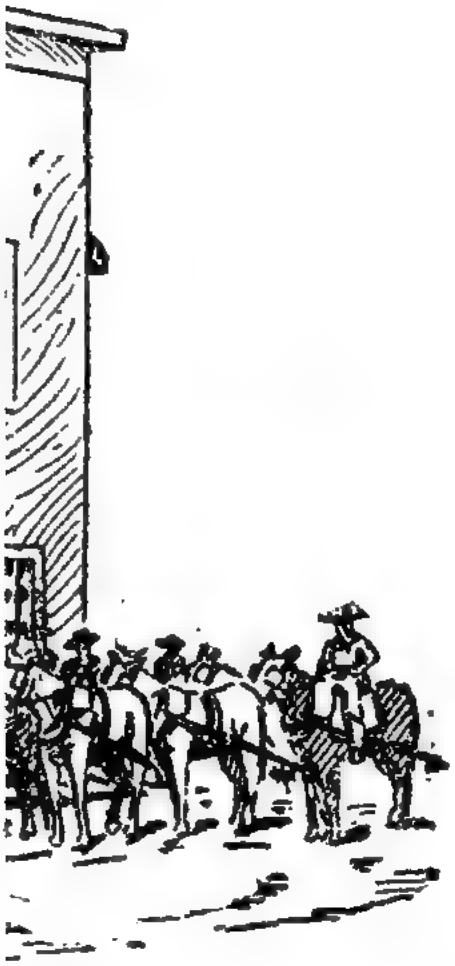
Gifts stacked under the tree were to be distributed to children after the program, which was nearing its end. Then an accident happened. According to one account, eight-year-old Frank Buick was speaking his part at the time; according to another, the choir was singing its last song.

Somebody climbed over a bench to leave or change position and tipped one of the four Rochester lamps that hung from the ceiling. Several accounts say, uncertainly, that the person who moved was young George Payne, a visitor to the Frank Buick home. The jolt sloshed coal oil into the lamp burner, causing

ver Lake

By THOMAS S. STIMMEL

Photos Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society
Except Where Noted



In the *Oregonian* on January 4, 1895.

the flame to flare abruptly. Burning oil spilled on the Christmas tree, burdened with its adornments of cotton puffs, popcorn strings, and paper chains. The oil splashed on the floor, leaving tiny spots of flame.

An account of what happened next was printed in the county seat weekly, the Lake County *Examiner*, a month later. It was written by a committee of thirteen witnesses, its purpose being to correct the proliferating erroneous accounts and unfounded rumors. Their story, according to one latter-day editor, is a remarkably sane and accurate report of a community disaster.

At first, clearer heads prevailed. Francis Chrisman, a co-owner of the store, twisted the flaming lamp from its hanger and started toward the only door at the rear of the hall. Another person reached in to turn down the wick, but the lamp continued to flare. Others rushed in, flailing the lamp with hats and coats, "until it was finally knocked from Mr. Chrisman's grasp and rolled upon the floor, a burning, seething mass."

The committee reported, "It was barely more than two minutes from the time the lamp fell until the entire building was aflame." The calm soon turned to chaos. "At the beginning of the conflagration everything was in a turmoil of excitement and commotion. Some were calling for loved ones that could not be found. Some were rushing hither and thither through the blinding heat of smoke and flame, trying to find some means of escape from the prison of flames."

The small door at the rear of the hall opened to the narrow flight of outside stairs. The only other openings were two windows at the front of the hall, behind the stage curtains. Below them was a steep porch roof that had recently been added to the building. The terrified crowd surged toward those exits, its way impeded by the crude benches in the center of the room.

A man named Warren Duncan, backstage when the fire started, opened a window and helped fifteen or more people onto the porch roof. But most of them were too paralyzed with fright to jump to the ground, and the roof collapsed under their weight. Just as it began to give way, Duncan heard his wife cry for help. He grabbed her by the waist and they fell to the ground together.

At the other end of the hall, those who got to the door first were able to escape down the stairs. Some fell from the landing and some rolled most of the way down, but most were swept forward with the crush of humanity—or were swept to the side. The only door opened inward and was soon jammed; victims trying to escape encountered fathers who rushed up from outside to find their families. Lucinda Schroeder, wife of a rancher, had shoved her mother through the door and then stood by it, holding it open so frantic people would not force it shut and block their own escape. She died at her self-appointed post, last seen there when the burning stairs collapsed. Her young son died elsewhere in the hall.

"It does not seem possible that anyone escaped and then returned through the blinding smoke and flames to the rescue of some loved or perishing one, for it would be utterly impossible for anyone to make his way through the surging mass of people that thronged the stair and doorway," the committee report said.

JOHN BUICK, his wife Matti, and four children were in the crowd that surged toward the door at the rear. The father carried baby Veva while son Roy, six, clung to his coattails. The mother tried to crowd close behind them, carrying David, four. Frank, eight, who had been in the program, was separated from them.

Buick, the son he took with him, and baby Veva survived; his wife and youngest son perished. Frank was thrown by somebody from the back door to the snow-covered ground after the stairs collapsed. He escaped serious injury.

Men on the ground attempted to fight the fire and rescue victims until rescue became impossible. Augustus Schroeder, husband of heroic Lucinda, was in the hall when the fire started. He described the rescue effort in testimony before a subsequent coroner's jury. "I turned around and started back to where my wife and baby were but was caught in the jam and shoved outdoors. After I got downstairs, Francis Chrisman said for me to help him put up the hose on the pump. After we put the hose on, Francis and I commenced pumping and William Hough had hold of the nozzle, throwing water on the flames as the people came out.

"Something went wrong with the hose and I left it and ran around to the front of the building and called for a ladder. Mr. Marshall was coming across the street with one. Then I climbed to the window and called for my wife to come to me. I don't know how many came down the ladder. The water from the hose checked the fire from burning those coming down the stairway.

"I stayed on the ladder until those below called for me, 'For Heaven's sake, jump.' I had hold of Roy Ward then. Mr. Thompson had climbed up before that and got into the window with me and together we pulled Roy Ward out. He

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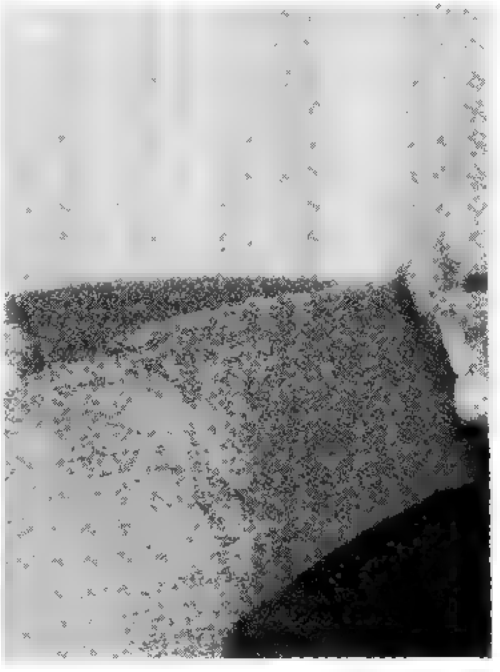
Dr Bernard Daly of Lakeview



Mrs. Veva Poorman

and Mr. Buick's daughter were the last ones saved."

Nothing more could be done. "When the last that were rescued escaped," reported the citizens' committee, "there was not a sound or a moan to be heard above the roar and crackling of the flames. Gas doubtless produced instant suffocation, and the forty souls that so bravely perished in the fatal death trap met their death unconscious of their fate

"Nearly all who were present had relatives or friends who were being steadily but surely consumed before their very gaze. It was truly a heartrending and sickening sight to behold."

Forty people perished in the flames. Three more who escaped the building would later die of their injuries.

Care for the injured became the immediate concern. But such medical supplies as may have existed were lost in the burning store. And there was no doctor.

Dr. W.M. Thompson, the town physician, had left earlier that day to treat a patient in Paisley, the next town down the line, fifty miles south. He was halfway home when a messenger intercepted him, and he arrived at Silver Lake about 4:00 a.m. on Christmas Day.

The only other physician in the county was Dr. Bernard Daly in Lakeview, the county seat 100 miles south. The nighttime ride through snow and freezing weather to summon Daly's help must rank as one of the truly heroic, but little known, rides in western frontier history. Even the name of the rider is not known for certain. The Silver Lake committee's report mentioned only that a courier was dispatched. But the credit generally has gone to a young man named Ed O'Farrell. The first newspaper notice of the fire, a sketchy paragraph in the Lake County Examiner three days later, reported that "Mr. Ed O'Farrell who brought the word left there 20 minutes after the fire started. He traveled the 100 miles in 15 hours."

Very little is known about O'Farrell, a cowboy who rode for Silver Lake ranches. Presumably he was young and single, without the concerns of family members trapped or injured in the fire; probably he nominated himself for the ride. There is no record of where he had come from or where he went afterward.

Neither do informal accounts agree on the facts of his ride. According to one, O'Farrell rode his own horse; by another, he took the best horse he could find in town; by yet another, he took a racing mare offered by a rancher who was to lose his wife and daughter in the fire and the horse never raced again. Whether O'Farrell rode one horse all the way also is uncertain, but it seems likely that he aroused ranchers during that long night to change mounts, pass on his alarming news, and ask that fresh teams and hot food be prepared for the doctor who would be coming through, later.

Author's Photograph

Silver Lake was directly affected by the fire. But the greatest burden fell on the family of William Owsley, which lost fifteen members or relatives. Identification of the remains of those who died in the building was not possible or practical; all were placed in five wooden coffins and buried in a common grave after a single funeral service. Four years later, an immense black marble monument, financed by popular subscription, was shipped over the mountains and placed over the only mass grave in the state of Oregon. Engraved on the monument were the names and age—carefully delineated by years, months, and days—of all forty victims buried there. Many of the lives were tragically brief, because Christmas Eve was for children. Of those who died, sixteen were children, sixteen were women, and eight were men.

Little Veva Buick, now Mrs. Veva Poorman Buick, ninety-two, is the sole living survivor of the fire. Family letters in her possession tell something of the personal impact of the tragedy. They were written to young Ed Buick, her brother, who was living with his grandparents in Roseburg. Two weeks after the fire, eight-year-old brother Frank wrote to Ed, "It's awful lonesome without momma and David." He added a request. "If you have any money left Grandmother [Davis] wants you to send her a couple dozen envelopes trimmed in black."

Grandmother Davis wrote a month later: "Don't you remember how last summer Davie used to talk about going to Jesus' house?" She said she had declined to go to the "Christmas tree" that fateful night but instead stayed home and read the Bible. "All of a sudden I felt as though I must get down on my knees and pray, and about the same time I was praying the hall was burning.

"Just think, Eddie, how near I came to being the only one left."

It is certain, though, that Ed O'Farrell and his horse, alone on a mission of urgency, raced through a night of subzero darkness, broke trail through clogging snowdrifts, and endured savage winter winds to get the message through. O'Farrell was an authentic hero, unknown before his ride and unacclaimed afterward.

O'Farrell reached Lakeview at 4:00 p.m. on Christmas Day. An hour later Dr. Daly was on his way in a curtained buggy driven by Willard Duncan. Because alerted ranchers were ready with changes of teams, the doctor reached Silver Lake in thirteen hours. There was heroic coincidence here; Daly's driver was a brother of Warren Duncan, who helped survivors through the window of the burning community hall and an uncle of Lucinda Schroeder, who held open the door above the building's outside stairs.

Neither doctor, Thompson nor Daly, charged for his services. There was an unusual postscript, however, to Daly's involvement. He was a remarkable man—doctor, banker, rancher, judge, and benefactor of education—who later became a state legislator. It was his senate bill, a law still in effect today, that required outside doors in all public buildings to open outward.

Virtually every family within range of

The only mass grave in Oregon was marked by a marble monument four years after Silver Lake's tragic Christmas fire

By LEE A. SILVA

Big Night for

November 18, 1985. It was the world premiere of a big screen western movie that was rumored to be innovative for the giant size of its screen, for its spectacular scenery, and for the fact that its entire two hours were filmed completely outdoors, without benefit of a single soundstage, in the natural beauty of America's Southwest.

Even though the movie was filmed in black and white and its twenty-five-year-old leading man was an unknown before the movie was made, hundreds of people waited in line outside the theater for the chance to buy a ticket for an event that had been sold out for weeks.

In the theater lobby, a cocktail bar and massive chuck wagon buffet, in true Old West fashion, offered drinks and delectables to guests of the leading man's family. Some of the biggest names in the film industry rubbed elbows and talked with mounting anxiety about the big screen western they were about to see. Even Louis L'Amour, the biggest selling western author of all time, had left his typewriter long enough to see this very special western movie. It was also rumored that one of the biggest cowboy stars of the last two decades had filmed a special introduction to the movie.

Was this the beginning of a resurgence of the good old epic western's popularity? Well, yes and no

The movie, *The Big Trail*, was filmed in 1929, and its tall, gangly star, who had never acted before, had just changed his name from Marion Morrison to John Wayne.

Raoul Walsh, the director of the film, had seen Wayne, fresh out of Los Angeles' University of Southern California, stacking chairs in a prop room at Twentieth Century Fox. By signing Wayne to a contract, he had immediately ended his long search for an unknown actor to play the title role in *The Big Trail*.

Walsh had written the script for *The Big Trail* in collaboration with Hal G. Everts, the noted western novelist. To honor the pioneers of the American West, Walsh wanted the film to be a truly big epic about the trials and hardships of coming west in a wagon train in the mid-1800s. To achieve that goal, he shot the film not only in the standard 35mm screen size of the day, but also in a special 70mm wide-screen version called "Grandeur." The 1920s were one of the most innovative eras in the history of movies, and the Grandeur image had been developed by Twentieth Century Fox in an attempt to create more dramatic effect by "surrounding" the audience with the wide screen's impact.

Previous to *The Big Trail*, Grandeur had been used in only a handful of short subjects. For *The Big Trail*'s 1930 premiere, Walsh had handmade custom projectors and special screens twenty feet high and forty-two feet wide at Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood and at the Roxy in New York.

Sound, however, was the new rage in the film industry. Most theater owners were busy enough spending their money to convert from silents to sound without having to bother with building a bigger screen and adding special Grandeur projectors, too. The Great Depression finished off Grandeur even before most people had heard of it. *The Big Trail* was seen in Grandeur in less than a dozen cities for only a few weeks before being put on the shelf for good.

The film had been released simultaneously in its standard 35mm version. But without its wide screen, it lost most of its spectacular impact. It died a rapid death without receiving much attention. It would remain for John Wayne to go on to other films and become a legend before anyone would take much notice of his first feature film.

In 1974, Twentieth Century Fox

In *The Big Trail*, John Wayne is the

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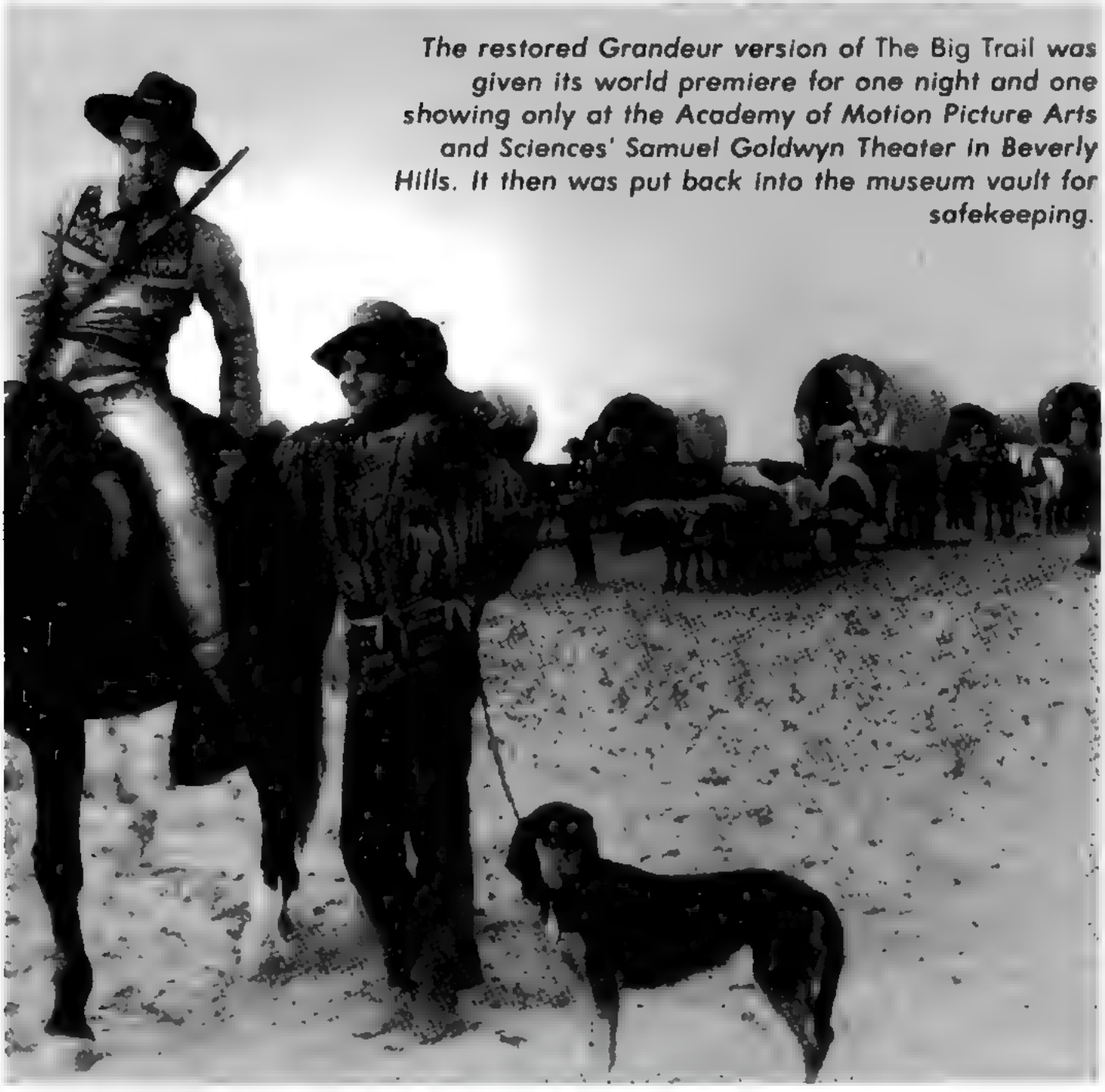
a Big Western

Photos Courtesy of Batjac Productions, Inc.



The restored Grandeur version of The Big Trail *was given its world premiere for one night and one showing only at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Samuel Goldwyn Theater in Beverly Hills. It then was put back into the museum vault for safekeeping.*

scout for a westward bound wagon train. In this still, he has already developed that now-famous furrowed brow scowl

dusted off the original print and negative of the Grandeur version of *The Big Trail* and donated them to New York's Museum of Modern Art, which has a special program dedicated to restoring and preserving historically significant old movies.

The Big Trail was badly deteriorated, so in 1981 several years of painstaking restoration were begun. With the most advanced sound and film techniques of the day, the Grandeur version of *The Big Trail* was finally transferred to modern Cinemascope film.

On November 18, 1985, the restored Grandeur version of *The Big Trail* was given its world premiere for one night and one showing only at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Samuel Goldwyn Theater in Beverly Hills. It then was put back into the museum vault for safekeeping.

What a big premiere for a big movie it was! The event was hosted by Michael and Patrick Wayne, John Wayne's oldest sons, who now head Wayne's film company, Batjac Productions. It included a special introduction filmed and donated by Clint Eastwood, John Wayne's popular successor as the ultimate cowboy hero.

The original movie poster for *The Big Trail*

In 1930 the story line of *The Big Trail* may have dripped with romance, pathos, and drama, but by today's sophisticated standards, it was a little cornball. And, although thousands of dollars had been spent on restoring the soundtrack of the new version, the dialogue was at times difficult to understand.

But it didn't matter, for the sheer magnitude and wide expanse of the picture, even in black and white, created a visual impact that left the audience gasping in awe throughout the movie. That impact was aided by director Walsh's unlimited use of hundreds of extras, animals, and covered wagons, or whatever else might be needed continuously to fill out the background of a scene.

Walsh also cleverly placed cameras to give the audience a lot of distant background or a sense of "actually being there." In one scene, for example, the camera angle is from the lead ox of a Conestoga wagon, providing a clear shot of the front of the wagon as it moves. John Wayne rode on horseback first on one side of the wagon, then on the other, an innovative technique for its day. In some of the opening scenes shot from a bluff overlooking a valley, there are so many wagons far in the background that they appear to be mere figures on one of those old-time Hollywood painted backdrops until, here and there, a horse or human or ox moves.

Another scene shows the covered wagons being roped down an enormous, almost perpendicular cliff. It is so sensational that it brought a sudden, collective gasp from the audience when it first flashed onto the screen. In still another scene, shot at night from a bluff overlooking the wagon train camped in a small valley, Walsh captures an approaching thunderstorm, complete with real thunder and lightning. When questioned about the scene's startling realism, Peter Williamson, the head of

John Wayne "palavers" with the Indians in this scene from *The Big Trail*.

John Wayne and Marguerite Churchill in *The Big Trail*

MOMA's old movie project, speculated that Walsh might have found some way to use special effects to make the lightning bolts more vivid. One way or another, Walsh was a real genius at his craft, for the scene is truly magnificent.

In a scene of the wagon train crossing a swollen river, the camera angle is from the middle of the river rather than from the opposite bank. It gives viewers the impression they are actually there, an impression enhanced by some of the trickiest, wettest stunt work ever in a western movie.

Perhaps the best camera effect of all was the sheer power and energy of a nighttime stampede in the driving rain. Panicked steers mill and run; *real* cowboys dodge in and out among them on horseback, lit sporadically by lightning flashes as if one of Frederick Remington's famous black and white paintings had suddenly come to life in movement on the big screen.

Also impressive is a view of dozens of Indians on horseback suddenly appearing on the ridge of a hill and silhouetted by the sky behind them, a visual look that would be repeated in hundreds of westerns of the future, though never quite the way it was done here for the first time.

Walsh, a stickler for detail, rounded up over 1900 real Shoshone, Arapahoe, Cheyenne, and Crow Indians to use in the film. Off camera the various tribes were still in 1929 "not particularly keen about each other," as one press release of the day stated. It was also reported that the Indians had insisted on living in their teepees during the filming of the movie and that they would not eat precooked food, preferring to slaughter and cook their own steers as they needed them.

In one scene three Indians portray scouts who first see the wagon train. When they leap onto their horses and gallop off, there can be no doubt that they really have spent their entire lives on horseback—a far cry from the painted Indians of the 1940s and '50s westerns who used stunt men to do their riding for them.

One of the highlights of the 1985 screening of *The Big Trail* was the nostalgia shared by the audience that night, especially when it came to the Duke himself. There were a ripple of comment and a lot of cheers when the young John Wayne rode into his first scene. The response grew when he spoke his first lines in his younger but still instantly recognizable "pilgrim" voice. The audience cheered again after Wayne delivered what must have been a three-

Twenty-three-year-old John Wayne in his first movie, *The Big Trail*

minute romantic monologue to his leading lady, Marguerite Churchill midway through the movie. Toward the end, when he again strings together a bunch of sentences about why the-West-must-be-won-against-all-odds-for-the-sake-of-Manifest-Destiny, the lines are so dripping with the well known latter-day John Wayne flag-waving patriotism that the scene received the biggest cheer of all.

So the screening went. There were ripples of comment when Wayne's lifelong pal, Ward Bond, first appeared and more murmurs when old-time movie buffs recognized the great Shakespearean actor, Tyrone Power, Sr., in an offbeat role as the bad guy. Still more comment followed when all those real Indians attacked the wagon train in another innovative film sequence.

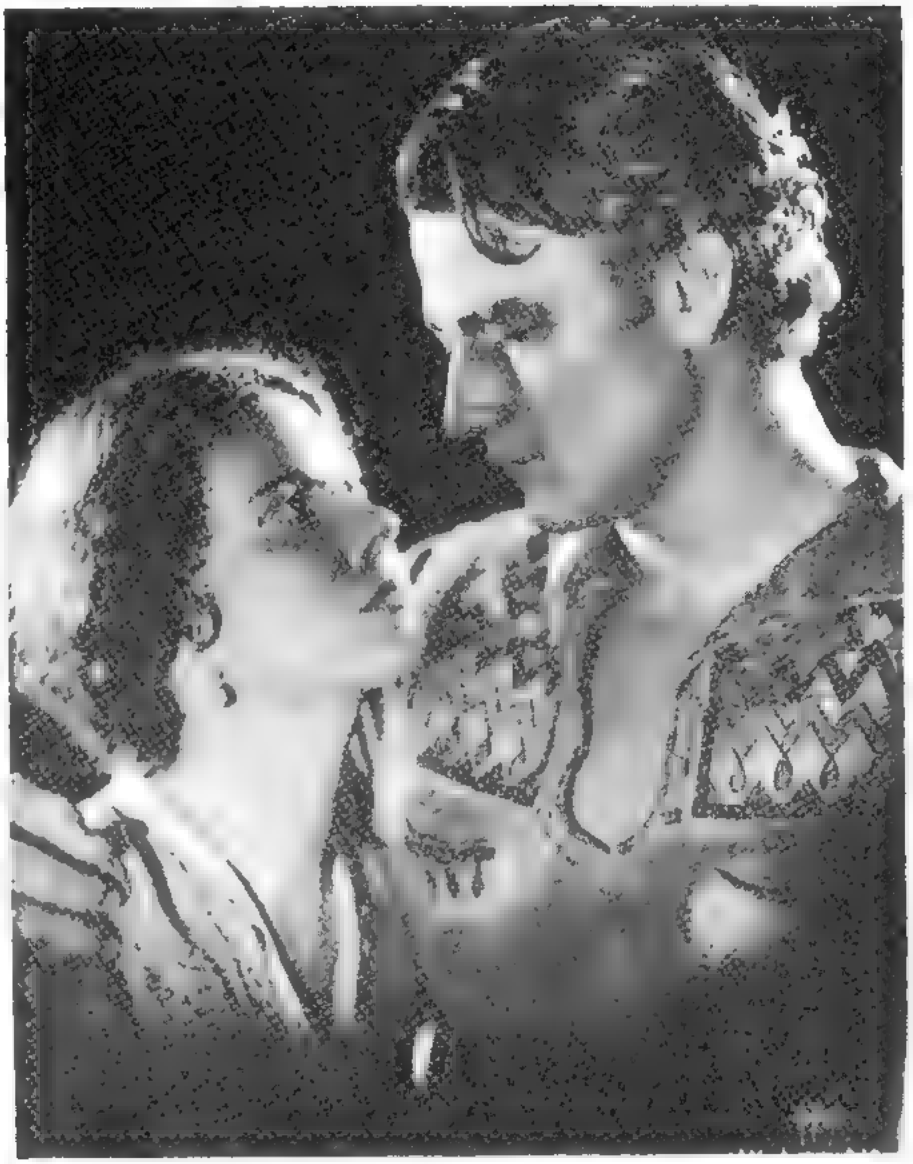
Needless to say, the film is a real treat. Through it all, you can almost feel the mud and dirt and grime and dust. *The Big Trail* was filmed primarily in the big sky area around Jackson Hole, Wyoming, the deserts of Arizona, and in the big trees country of California's Sequoia National Park. No Hollywood prop man or set designer could ever begin to duplicate the natural grandeur of America's landscape. Though many Conestoga wagons were custom built for the movie, Walsh's penchant for realism is especially vivid in his meticulous use of authentic period clothing, tack, weapons, and even people, for it was obvious to anyone who had ever spent any time cowboyin' that every cowhand and muleskinner in the film was really an old hand at it.

The biggest, most pleasant surprise of all, though, was the young John Wayne. Not yet as polished as he would become, The Duke's performance nevertheless was flawless, hampered only by the slightly hokey dialogue of the day. The now-familiar clipped macho voice already brought comfort and security to men, women, and children alike.

Director Raoul Walsh spared no expenses in filming ***The Big Trail***. In this scene, some of the 1900 American Indians used in the film are attacking a wagon train containing

One of the top directors of his day, Walsh already had produced twenty-six films for Fox alone and had a reputation for foreseeing star quality in unknown actors. The publicity release for the 1985 premiere of *The Big Trail* states that "Walsh used Wayne to symbolize the restless energy, adventurous spirit, and moral values of the Western settlers who set out in wagon train 'armies' to conquer a vast and uncharted North American wilderness." But even Walsh could hardly have known that whatever special quality he had seen in young Marion Morrison would make John Wayne not only the most popular movie star in history but also a symbol of America itself. Yet looking at the life of

over fifty real Conestoga wagons.



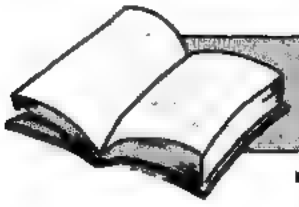
John Wayne and his leading lady, Marguerite Churchill, in *The Big Trail*.

John Wayne, America's hero, in that light, his first starring role seems almost prophetic.

The big-screen version of *The Big Trail* has still been seen only once on that night of November 18, 1985. But efforts to restore its soundtrack continue, and there are tentative plans to show the film again on the East Coast sometime in the near future.

As every western movie buff knows, there has been a long drought of westerns. They have been sent to the south forty by the popularity of detective, science fiction, and car-crash films. The 1985 films, *Silverado* and *Pale Rider* promised to generate renewed interest in westerns but failed. No doubt the huge turnout for the 1985 showing of *The Big Trail* was created in part by John Wayne's tremendous cult following and by the fact that the premiere would be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. But it is possible, too, that people are just plain hungry to see a good, old-fashioned epic western again.

It has been a long famine since films like *Red River* or even *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. But if anyone in Hollywood ever wants to make another western film that stampedes realistically onto the screen, *The Big Trail* ought to be mandatory viewing for the writer, director, and producer before the cameras even start rolling. Then people might once again want to see western movies, because they will once again have something worth looking at.



Books

Wild West Show

BUCKSKINS, BULLETS, AND BUSINESS—A HISTORY OF BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST. *By Sara J. Blackstone. Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881. $27.95 clothbound.*

This in-depth study of Bill Cody and his Wild West show is a delight to be enjoyed by Cody buffs as well as those interested in pioneer circuses. Of special interest are the pictures, many of which have not been published previously, and the extensive bibliography, containing original sources. Blackstone has captured the essence of the show and its performers with her perceptively selected quotes. Especially poignant is Blackstone's account of the treatment of the Indian performers. This volume documents the logistics of financing, promoting, moving, eating, setting up of the tent(s) and the various tasks necessary to keep the show on the road. The scholarly approach of the writing does, unfortunately, slow down what should be a good story.

—Kit Collings
Laramie, Wyoming

Christian Cowman

THE FORGOTTEN CATTLE KING. *By Benton R. White. Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843. $14.95 clothbound.*

Perhaps the Llano Estacado's forgotten cattle king was victimized by his tongue-twister of a name—Fountain Goodlet Oxsheer. In any case, he is not remembered like Charles Goodnight or John Slaughter, though he lived till 1931. He was a genuine cattle baron who eventually would own eighteen ranches stretching from Oklahoma all the way into northern Mexico. He should be remembered if only because he pioneered pure-bred stock in Texas, changing the beef cattle industry's base from stringy Longhorns to sleek, white-faced Herefords. At the same time, he upgraded the quality of his riding stock, mules as well as horses. He also "struck" water on the bone-dry Staked Plains. His windmills pulled up enough underground water to transform a desert into fine rangeland.

Towards the end of his career, Oxsheer's holdings were reduced by business panics and reverses to "only" 10,000 acres, each acre mortgaged to the top of its fence posts. Still, he was not half as bad off as when he had begun at age nineteen in Milam County in the economic ruin of the post-Civil War years. Texas was overrun with half-wild cattle as well as carpetbaggers, renegades, and a Yankee army of occupation. Just to survive, F.G. helped trail-herd Longhorns up the Chisholm Trail to the railhead at Abilene, Kansas. The rest, as they say, "is history." Barbed wire and sodbusters put an end to the long drives, but Oxsheer kept buying ranches and moving his headquarters westward, from Little River and Calvert to Lampasas, then to Colorado City, and finally to the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos beyond the caprock of the Staked Plains escarpment.

This is a no-nonsense book of biography and history. Since Oxsheer was a "Christian" cowman, there are no saloon brawls or drunken gunfights to romanticize in his long career, although he was once pressured into serving as a shotgun-toting sheriff.

—Richard Dillon
Mill Valley, California

Frontier Artist

WITH PEN AND PENCIL ON THE FRONTIER IN 1851. *The Diary and Sketches of Frank Blackwell Mayer. Edited by Bertha L. Heilbron. A Borealis Book reprint, 1986. Minnesota Historical Society Press, 690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55101. $9.95 paperbound.*

Frank Blackwell Mayer traveled to Minnesota territory in 1851, so he could sketch and paint scenes during the signing of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux between the Dakota Indians and the United States government.

The works of a skilled and talented artist, his paintings now hang in many museums, including the National Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Minnesota Historical Society.

Fifty illustrations in the book, all black and white, reveal Mayer's sensitivity and ability to capture the character of his subjects.

The diary Mayer kept during his trek from Baltimore to the Minnesota territory contains descriptions that are of value today to historians, as well as his paintings. He recorded scenes and events in his writing much as he did with his brush. He put down what he saw.

The events Mayer records are not always completely accurate but the editor, the late Bertha L. Heilbron, refers to other sources for details and carefully notes them when necessary. She also took such care to keep the original writing intact, while adding her corrections, that it detracts somewhat from the enjoyment of reading the text. For historical research, however, this is essential.

Ironically, Mayer himself realized the importance of his work to posterity and spent years trying to get Minnesota to sponsor a large (about six-by-twelve foot) painting of the treaty of the Traverse des Sioux. Despite efforts of the Minnesota Historical Society, the legislature would not appropriate the $10,000 he needed to do the canvas. Mayer reduced the price to $3,000, but was still turned down. Later he sold his sketch to the Minnesota Historical Society for $200.

By the time the State Capitol was ready for murals in 1903, Mayer was dead. Another artist, Frank D. Millet, was commissioned to do the painting based on Mayer's sketch.

A similar fate was in store for Mayer's diary. He couldn't get it published and, in fact, an important section of it was lost when it was finally printed in 1932. When the material was discovered, it was published in 1941. This 1986 reprint contains both sections.

—Willah Weddon
Stockbridge, Michigan

The Real Billy the Kid

ALIAS BILLY THE KID: THE MAN BEHIND THE LEGEND. *By Donald Cline. Sunstone Press, P.O. Box 2321, Santa Fe, NM 87504. $12.95 paperbound.*

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As one of America's most enduring heroes, Billy the Kid still awaits a complete and factual biography. Cline has now brought that possibility a giant step closer.

The Authentic Life of Billy the Kid, by Sheriff Pat Garrett, lacked accuracy even though it was published just a year after the Kid's death, and such spurious blockbusters as *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, by Walter Noble Burns, did little more than fuel the myth. Other biographers have often incorporated the basic errors of Garrett and Burns and, during the last few years, as considerable nonsense has become entrenched, the real Billy the Kid has gotten more remote. Now Don Cline provides hope that maybe there is an authentic Billy the Kid after all.

Most biographers, including this one, never believed the Kid was born and grew up in New York City. Cline says we are wrong, and builds a good case. He has not only located Billy the Kid and his brother Joe on the New York streets, but he has also unearthed the Kid's mother, documenting her boarding the *Deavonshire* out of Ireland, bound for New York harbor. Cline even identifies the Kid's real father, a married fruit peddler named Edward McCarty (no relation to Catherine). The author describes the Kid's troubles in the Big Apple, where he killed a friend, and then determinedly tracks him to the wilds of New Mexico where miner William H. Antrim married the Kid's mother and adopted him and brother Joe. There is not much evidence that Antrim liked women, although no evidence exists that he was homosexual either, and he apparently took the family as a package deal.

Cline trails the Kid to his death, and provides new details along the way. The author even located a bloody pocketbook carried by Bob Olinger, killed by the Kid with a shotgun at the Lincoln, New Mexico, courthouse. Five letters were inside, and all are printed in the book.

This is not to say that *Alias Billy the Kid* is without faults. The editor needs a book on how to edit. Cline needs a book on how to write biography. The notes tend to be superficial; the organization and writing frequently are murky and wandering, especially during the first quarter of the book. The cover painting is amateurish; the title smacks of C.L. Sonnichsen's, *Alias Billy the Kid*, which isn't illegal, but probably will lead to confusion.

In spite of its faults, however, Cline's book furnishes the most important Billy the Kid revelations in years. A follow-up biography of William H. Antrim is forthcoming, and Cline's masterful research will likely prove just as unshakable with Antrim as it does with Billy the Kid.

—Leon C. Metz
El Paso, Texas

Frontier Author

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ (APIKUNI). *By Warren L. Hanna. University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Avenue, Norman OK 73019. $24.95 clothbound.*

Many young fellows from the east traveled west during the last century. Some made it big in mining, some in

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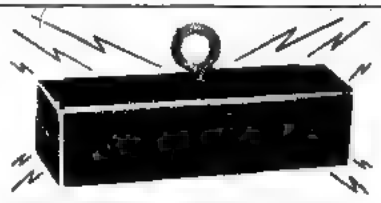

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railroads. Some held up those railroads, while others became cowboys or sodbusters. More than a few turned scout or hide-hunter, but few of those wandering thousands made it in literature. James Willard Shults of Boonville, New York, did just that, in the process changing the family name to Schultz and taking a Blackfoot wife.

Young Schultz landed at Saint Louis, Missouri, in the spring of 1877, after taking an early vacation from the Peekskill Military Academy. He had fired off the campus cannon to the detriment of dozens of windows. Schultz' uncle, Ben Stickney of the famed Planters Hotel, introduced him to men well-known in the western trade. The stories of trappers, buffalo hunters, and Indian traders fired the eighteen-year-old's imagination. He determined to make the most of his enforced absence from home, setting off within days on a riverboat up the Missouri on a vacation that never ended.

Having read and reveled in such classics of the Far West as the Lewis and Clark *Journal*, Catlin's *Eight Years*, and *The Oregon Trail*, the young Schultz was now about to live through the colorful times that became the basis for his own classic, *My Life as an Indian*.

But there were many years between that steamboat trip and the arrival of James Willard Schultz as an author. He became a full-fledged trapper out of Fort Benton and went on to establish a chain of trading posts along the Missouri with a man named Joseph Kipp. Ranging through the Indian country eventually brought Schultz into contact with such high plains tribes as the Blackfeet and the Bloods, and his notebooks bulged with notes, for he had already determined to record his wild and wonderful way of life. His astonishing memory stored hundreds of further details.

In June of 1879, Schultz got about as much local color as he could handle—the color of his own blood—when he was involved in a raid of the friendly Pikuni Blackfeet tribesmen against their old enemy, the Assiniboines. It was a raid that went wrong. Only its leader came back with an enemy scalp. The Pikuni lost three of their best warriors, and Schultz received a bullet through the shoulder. But it was the stuff of terse, pre-Hemingway fiction, to be used, with variations, throughout Schultz' books and stories.

Finding war parties a bit rich for his tastes, Schultz kept to his trading posts, veering off, little by little, into the role of the professional hunter and guide. But it was not all guns, hides, and traps, for in the same year of 1879, he took a Pikuni wife, *Mutsi-Awotan-Ahki*, or Fine Shield Woman. It was the happiest time of his life, eventually producing a son, Hart Merriam Schultz (Lone Wolf) destined to be a fine artist and successful rancher. It ended with the death of the woman Schultz had nicknamed *Natahki* ("Pretty Girl"), nearly a quarter of a century later.

With the Indian trade in the doldrums, Schultz in 1885 began to guide such people as the noted outdoorsman, George Bird Grinnell, editor, publisher, writer, ethnologist and explorer. The first to recognize Schultz as a unique personality as well as a perceptive and talented writer, Grinnell provided him with an outlet for his early articles and stories and later sponsored *My Life as an Indian*.

From the 1890s onward Schultz' stories and shorter pieces began to appear in such American publications as the *National Stockman and Farmer*, *Frontier Magazine*, *Forest and Stream*, and the highly-popular, youth-oriented *American Boy*, *Boy's Life* and *Youth's Companion*.

More than many authors who tend to write themselves into their stories, Schultz appeared in practically all of his tales, whether under his own name or some variation—with the best of reasons. He had lived those dynamic yarns himself. They rang true, and his readers responded, urging more until his novels totaled over thirty-five. Another five appeared after his death in 1947. His output of short stories and articles has been tabulated at over 100, with others still surfacing from various media.

Named *Apikuni*, or Running Crane, by a chief of the same name in recognition of his contributions to and affection for the Pikuni Blackfeet, Schultz on paper, or his alter-ego, was a noble, rock-steady character. In real life he was that person beloved of many modern writers, the flawed hero, addicted to alcohol, tobacco, and morphine.

Author Warren L. Hanna, who first met Schultz at Glacier National Park shortly after World War I, has given the reader a book that will furnish a better and deeper understanding of James Willard Schultz and his love for the West and its people.

—Bill Garwood
West Chester, Pennsylvania

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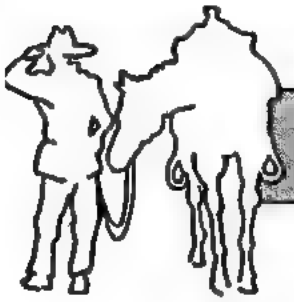

Trails Grown Dim

Western genealogy

Fleming

I am seeking descendants of Robert Thomas Fleming (1835–1884), who migrated to Fannin County Texas at about age seventeen with his sister and brother-in-law, Louisa and Riley Chaffin. Robert and Mary Fleming had the following children: The Reverend William Archie, married to Lucy Ramsey; John T., married to Martha Holland; Mary L/F; Walter Henry, married to Minnie Bell Johnson; Martha E.; Thomas Robert, married to Mamie Holland; Rene Mary Lucinda, married to Jeff Dixon. I will share early research in exchange for present generation data.—**Aulena Scearce Gibson, 3607 Arlington, Lawton, OK 73505.**

Reynolds

Any information on my great-grandfather and grandmother would be appreciated. My great-grandfather was Frank Reynolds. My grandfather was Joseph Isac Reynolds, who was born September 9, 1889. He lived in Mobeetie, Texas, and Montague County near Nocona, Texas. His brothers and sisters were Charlie (who lived in Arkansas), Olie, Oma, Agnes, Lee, and Artic. Joseph Isac Reynolds married Sarah Belle Sigman, who was born January 14, 1891. Sarah Belle Sigman's father was Hosea Sigman, who was born November 19, 1885, in Guernsey County, Ohio, and died December 31, 1931, in Montague County, Texas. Who was Hosea's wife? Their children were Bessie, Oral Manford, Jim D., Hosea Wood, Sarah Belle, and Donna May.—**Cecil L. Reynolds, Box 484, Briscoe, TX 79011.**

Weaver

Powell Weaver, trapper and scout in early Arizona, was born in White County, Tennessee, around 1800—probably April to July of 1797. Tradition says his father's name was Henry and his mother was French or Cherokee. He became a Catholic as Paulin de Jesus Guiva in New Mexico in August 1832, and was known from then on as Paulino or Pauline.

He served the Union troops in Arizona as scout off and on during the Civil War. His younger brother, known as Duff Green Weaver, was a well-known Union supporter in San Bernardino, California. Duff joined his brother in California in 1849 from Indiana. Duff was born August 10, 1823, but the place and his original first name are in doubt.

I would like to correspond with anyone working on Weaver families, especially those in Tennessee or with Powell connections.—**Pauline Sandholdt, Box 609, Salome, AZ 85348.**

Crawford-Bradley

George Forrest Crawford was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, about 1903. He was in the U.S. Army and stationed in San Antonio, Texas, in 1925–26.

Helene Ione Bradley was born in Ft. Worth, Texas, about 1903. The place and date of her marriage to George F. Crawford are not known.

These are my parents. The information given above is all I know of them and comes from my birth certificate. I was raised in an orphanage in San Antonio until I ran away at the age of nine or ten, never seeing either of them again. There was one brother, Max Calvin Crawford who was adopted by the Bradley's.

I would appreciate hearing from anyone who knows anything of these people, and I will gladly refund all postage.—**Edward Bradley Crawford, P.O. Box 520, Rye, TX 77369.**

Townsend

My grandfather John R. Townsend's tombstone reads July 27, 1831–December 25, 1898. The 1880 census lists him in Howard County, Arkansas, with his wife, Mary M. Kesterson, and six children.

The Veteran Affairs office in Washington and Little Rock gives the same John R. Townsend, and it reads, "Enlisted December 21, 1861, age 19, a resident of Texas, also a native of Texas." But the line between Arkansas and Texas was drawn about 1843, and the people in the 1870s still called themselves Texans. The only other John R. Townsend in Arkansas left with forty-nine miners and about fifty people, one of which was a William Teague. My dad had an uncle Bill Teague, so I think this is the same John R. Townsend that I am trying to locate. I'm trying to find his parents or brothers and sisters, but everywhere I have written has responded that the courthouse has burned down. I'm hoping someone can help.—**Edra T. Hall, 5744 Hagan Stone Park Road, Pleasant Garden, NC 27313.**

Mays-Bays-Bilyen-Adair-Thompson

I am looking for any information on my following ancestors: Lettie Mays, one quarter Cherokee; Samual Mays, Lettie's brother; William Penn Mays, another brother; William H. Mays, also a brother; Josiah S. Bays. Lettie's husband, who died January 22, 1875; Renal J. Bays, Josiah's father who died in 1878; Sarah Bilyen, Josiah's mother who died in 1883; John Bilyen, Sarah's father; Elizabeth Bilyen, Sarah's mother.

Samual married Nancy Adair. Her parents were Black-Watt Adair and Rachel Thompson of Old Cherokee Nation, Georgia.

Lettie ran away from Georgia and went to Indiana with her family to keep from being moved west with the other Indians. Old photocopies would be appreciated.—**Diane S. Jones, 522 S. Main, Apt. 17, Waurika, OK 73573.**

Readers' letters for "Trails Grown Dim" are printed as soon as space permits, so please be patient. Please type or print your query and limit letters to 150 words or less. Photos are welcome. We can't run current "missing persons" notices or lengthy genealogical requests, but we do attempt to print all letters as soon as we can. Any reader having information concerning persons referred to above is asked to communicate directly with the letter writer; please do not write to us.

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Secrets of a Cowboy Cook

By LUCIAN B. JACKSON

Many years ago, I had the good fortune—or the misfortune—of growing up on a cattle ranch. As a small boy, I automatically inherited the very prestigious position of cook's helper on the chuck wagon during a roundup or other cattle operations.

Of course, I was a curious and eager boy, so I learned many secrets in crude culinary art from an old chuck wagon cook who had been a permanent resident of the ranch for many years. That old fellow had the most important chore on the spread. He had to satisfy the appetites of all the rowdy cattle chasers on the ranch. Those unpolished gentlemen of the range were certainly not experts or connoisseurs of fine foods. All they expected was something to keep them going for twelve to fourteen hours a day without killing them. So the old cook could experiment to his heart's content, and from those primitive ventures in cooking the crude old gentleman discovered many jewels of the culinary art.

In those early days it was customary to butcher a beef before a roundup or cattle drive. Since there was no refrigeration, it was the cook's responsibility to keep the fresh meat from spoiling.

The first bill of fare, was a large pot of the traditional stew, called son-of-a-gun, sometimes referred to, by the cowboys, as S.O.B. For that famous kettle of mischief, the old cook used just about everything in the chuckbox, along with the liver, heart, tongue, melt, and sweetbreads of the freshly killed beef. The most important ingredient was the marrow gut, the undeveloped intestine of a young beef; it is considered by many men to be the best meat product of the beef animal. The cowboys always seemed to enjoy the initial robust pot of authority. Many have observed that such fare could put you horseback in a hurry.

The old cook would sometimes make what he called a rustlers' pie from the marrow gut. It was so named because the cowboys had to steal a helping before it disappeared. On rare occasions that ingenious chuck wagon chef would serve fried marrow gut for breakfast with a fried mush the boys called cow patty. It was made with corn meal and canned corn.

Lucian B. Jackson and his grandaughter, Melody, in 1970.

The most undesirable cuts of the meat were cut into strips and smoke dried for jerky. After that chore, the old cook would start building what he called his masterpiece, "Mud Creek Chili." Since the old fellow had no way of grinding the meat, he would cube about twenty pounds of beef in thumb-sized pieces. He would then dump them into a five-gallon pot, along with about a half gallon of water, and let it slowly simmer to create its own juices. He would then open about five or six cans of cowboy fruit (canned tomatoes). He squeezed and crushed the tomatoes through a colander with his hands to remove the seeds. The juice was added to the simmering meat along with a handful of salt, a handful of black pepper, a handful of garlic buttons, cumin, caraway seeds, and sugar. Everything was measured by the handful, big, little, or small. The most important addition to the pot was a generous handful of coarsely ground red chili powder from a large jar always kept handy in the chuck box. That final ingredient always gave the pot plenty of authority. The cowboys all agreed they could smell the concoction from half a mile away, even through the dust and humid smell of cows.

The unpolished old cook often liked to surprise the boys, so he would drop small, thick steaks in the simmering chili and let them cook for a few minutes, then serve them to the cowboys between slices of his old, tough sourdough biscuits. The rare steaks were surprisingly tasty when the red juices saturated the bread.

Of course, steaks were a staple of the cowhands' diet, so they had to be used or carefully preserved to avoid spoilage. The old cook would serve steaks in various ways for a few days. Then he would fry all the remaining cuts, pack them in large crocks, and pour hot suet over them. They would keep several days longer. When he prepared those precooked steaks, they were skewered on green sticks and slowly broiled over the open fire in their own fat. The cowboys always seemed to enjoy the slightly smoked leftover steaks.

About that time the old boss cook found himself in possession of a large amount of beef roasts and realized that he must use his ingenuity to utilize the enormous amount of meat before it was lost. He had the boys dig a large pit and build a roaring fire in it. He then cut the meat in five or six pound chunks and sprinkled them generously with a very spicy mixture, all his own. He tightly double wrapped each package in brown paper bags and tied it with wire. Six

packages of meat were then placed in damp burlap bags, and the opening was tied with a long piece of wire.

After the fire burned down to a deep bed of coals it was leveled and covered with six or seven inches of dirt. The bags were placed on top and covered with another seven inches of dirt, and the long wires were tied to stakes at the side of the pit. Another fire was started on top and maintained throughout the night. About eight o'clock the next morning, the fire was allowed to burn down to ashes. Just before noon, the old cook untied the wire from the stakes and gently lifted each burlap bag from the ashes and dirt.

After the bag was removed, the cook punched a hole in each brown paper package and let the broth drain into a small dishpan. He then dumped the meat into a larger pan. Even the cows and horses would sniff eagerly at the wonderful aroma. You can bet the cowboys would start drifting toward camp.

Probably the best food the crude old cook prepared was the delicious barbecue gravy he concocted from the broth of that amazingly tender meat. The boys could never seem to make their bread come out evenly with their gravy; the gravy always disappeared first.

Of course, great quantities of the tender, barbecued meat were consumed by the always-hungry cowpunchers. But, as usual, there were leftovers, so the cook would generously sprinkle black pepper over the meat and let it dry in the sun for several hours. It would usually last out the roundup.

As I look back and remember those early days as a chuck wagon cook's helper, I can't remember the old fellow ever washing his hands or taking a bath. But we never seemed to give that much thought, because in those days even the cowboys would take only two or three baths a year—whether they needed them or not.

The responsibilities of the chuck wagon cook were great, and his tricks and secrets were indelibly impressed on me. Those memories will never be forgotten. Now, many years later, when I am barbecuing or broiling steaks, I can sense my old friend peering over my shoulder. In preparing meat and most wild game, I still rely on the cookbook of my memories and the secrets so freely shared with me by my old friend, the chuck wagon cook.

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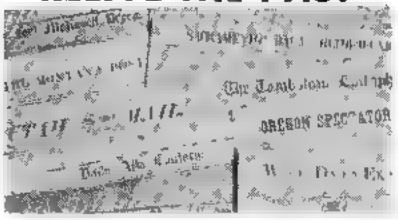
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OUT WEST

Vol. XVIII, No. 2. FEBRUARY, 1903.

THE RIGHT HAND OF THE CONTINENT.

BY CHARLES F. LUMMIS

IX

IT is but little more than half a century since the First Statesman of New England — a giant anywhere in American history, and the very Jove of "Tenderfeet" — Daniel Webster, towered superb in the Senate of the United States, mighty in righteous wrath to protect his home against contamination by the threatened national acquiring of the Far West. And this is a little of what he said:

"*What do we want with this vast, worthless area? This region of sterility and wild beasts, of deserts, shifting sands and whirlwinds of dust, of cactus and prairie dogs? To what use could we ever hope to put these great deserts or those endless mountain ranges, impregnable and covered to their very base with eternal snow? What can we ever hope to do with the Western coast, a coast of 3,000 miles, rockbound, cheerless, unvarying, with not a harbor on it? What use have we for such a country? Mr President, I will never vote one cent from the public treasury to place the Pacific coast one inch nearer to Boston than it now is!*"

It must have been a gallant thing to see that Lion of New England, rampant in defiance and scorn of the Brute West, the Preposterous Pacific. But not half so well worth while as it would be to watch and listen to Daniel Webster today, if we might hale him back to the pale glimpses of the moon, bind him and drag him Westward (since he would never come otherhow), and *show* him a little bit of what we "can ever do" with this "rock-bound and cheerless coast." Nor only what we "could hope to do" with it, but what we have already done and using the "We" in a national sense, as he did. For one of the things "We" did with it was to stop the extension of Slavery — and then Slavery itself. And both in despite of "Ichabod." Another thing "We" did with it was to transform the money standards and the money markets of all the world, within two years and forever; and the face of the world's chiefest industry. And yet another was to change "Ourselves" from a huddle of provinces to a Nation. It is a mere drop of detail in this vast bucket that we have also builded Out Here a State which is in ratio to population richer, better educated; with as good schools

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and more of them, and larger enrollment, and paying its schoolteachers nearly half as well again;* with more churches, more newspapers, more reading of books; and pretty much "more everything" than the State of Webster has today. This series of papers has already paid some little attention to the significance of this "vast and worthless area" to the nation that acquired it against Webster's advice. Roundly to sum up the influence which California alone has had upon almost every individual phase of our national life, will need — and will tax — the very greatest of historians; but the present well-meaning commentator may hope at least to give some reasonable abstract and forerword — enough, perhaps, to invite, and whet, an audience for the later, larger, and less overworked student who must some day do justice to a theme of such national importance. It will *not* be enough, certainly, to deprive a great many Easterners of the only serious resemblance they ever had to Daniel Webster. The spirit of provincialism never dies — that almost angry distrust we have of everything we know nothing about. But as time ripens, these human ignorances sink over a little lower in the social scale. You cannot see that they have fewer victims; but it is perfectly plain that there are fewer in Our Set. There still persist Congressmen and Professors immovable and immedicable; but it is already possible to believe them below their own professional average. By-and-by this particular stupidity will be cherished by none of higher rank in a Democracy than scullery maids and the rag-man. When it was a little uncomfortable, and considerably dangerous, to travel — as it once was — and when very little of the West (which always means not so much one particular incident of the compass as it means Out Doors) could be learned by reading, there was some excuse for being a "Tenderfoot." There isn't now. And this expressive Western definition of one whose feet have never yet hardened upon any broader or other soil than that of his own province — and never *would* harden — this Out-Door epithet for chronic In-Doorfulness, for narrowness, helplessness and intolerance rather beyond our fit allowance as finite beings — *Resolved*, that this Sufficient Word be, and hereby is, now and summarily transferred from Slang to English. It is the only Name for the Thing. Like tens of thousands of other words that now repose in the lexicographic Abraham's Bosom, it was born slang but is grown indispensable. And when a word *needs*, in any tongue, it is no longer slang. Tenderfoot it is, then, and no timid quotation points. The Tall T which it shall have is not Apologetic, but Proper. The word subtends a much wider — and much more significant — arc of humanity than, for instance, "Caucasian" or "Aryan." And as little as they are, so little is it intended to be used in these pages as a term of offense. It doesn't mean everyone who never saw the West; but only those who never would learn anything if they did. It is not the unremedied, but the irremediable, provincial that is meant. And in this modest attempt to anchor a definition never heretofore authoritatively fixed, I am not following a whim of my own, but plumbing by a tolerable intimate acquaintance, during two-thirds of my responsible years, with all the lands where the word is used. It is not abuse but classification. It is in the category not of "Nigger" but of "Yankee." Tenderfeet are, indeed, partly to blame for being "as we are." But so, also, in our secret heart, are Mongolians or Frenchmen.

*Average annual salary of teachers in public schools:

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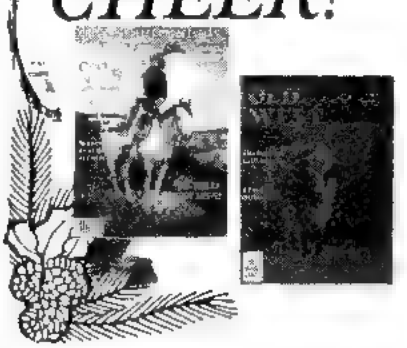

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Mar. 9	June 1987	May 1 - June 1
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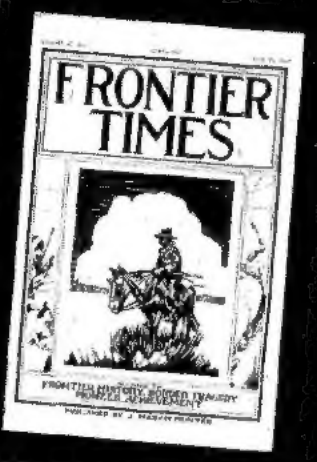

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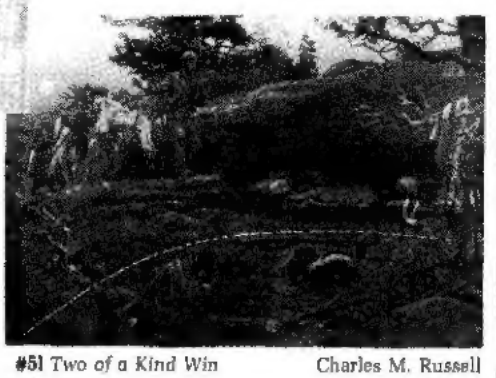

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